

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

January 18, 2005

Issue #1

WELCOME TO THE 2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION!

This is the first installment of the weekly Nashua Chamber legislative bulletin for the 2005 legislative session. The first legislative hearings of the session took place this week, and as always the Chamber will be closely monitoring developments and advocating for the interests of its members. During the session we will be focused on legislation large and small that impacts the business community. Each week we will be listing the bills that we are working on, if you see legislation that will impact your business and would like to have your voice heard please call the staff at the chamber. There is no Chamber in the state which has as active a role in Concord, and we are looking forward to another exciting year in the state capitol.

A New Legislature And A New Governor

Lots of members are asking what the impact will be of the change in the corner office and the change in leadership in the House of Representatives.

Governor Lynch has made no secret of his intention to veto any sales or income tax. Since he is a businessman, we are hoping that he will also oppose any increases in business taxes. He has taken the position that he will support a tobacco tax increase and that he will at least be open to consideration of gambling. He has said nothing on business taxes.

New House Speaker Doug Scamman from Stratham is a freshman in the House this year, but is a longtime veteran of the House, having served as Speaker in the 1980s. The new Speaker has expressed his doubts that any new revenue is needed, so at least at this point he seems like an unlikely candidate to support any business tax increases.

The inauguration of Governor Lynch and the election of Speaker Scamman, along with the re-election of Senate President Tom Eaton, bode well, at least initially, for strong lines of communication between the Governor and the legislative branch. For the time being, anyway.

Health Care Premiums. The Chamber's major legislative initiative this year will be a bill designed to try to lower health care premiums. We know that there is no more significant issue in the minds of our members than the costs of health insurance for small businesses in this region. The Chamber has drafted legislation which is being sponsored by Senators Foster and Clegg and Representatives Lasky, Price and Stepanek, which is intended to do the following: allow a "group" of small employers to be treated as "large employers" for health insurance rating and underwriting purposes, if in the aggregate

the group exceeds fifty (50) employees, and if the “group” accesses health insurance through an association formed for purposes other than the provision of health insurance.

This bill has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. Stand by, because we are going to ask you to become actively involved in the process of getting this bill passed.

THE WEEKS AHEAD...

- January 18, 2005 **HB 105** (denial of fertility treatment to a fertility patient) – Hearing – 9:00 a.m., LOB 205
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0105.html>
- SB 28** (confidentiality and workers’ compensation) – Hearing – 10:45 a.m., LOB 102
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/SB0028.html>
- HB 175** (divestiture of PSNH generation assets) – Hearing – 11:00 a.m., LOB 304
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0175.html>
- January 19, 2005 **HB 126** (grounds for termination of employment) – Hearing – 10:00 a.m., LOB 307
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0126.html>
- HB 167** (mail-in rebates for merchandise purchased within the state) – Hearing – 10:00 a.m., LOB 302
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0167.html>
- HB 91** (repealing the local property tax exemption for wooden poles and conduits) – Hearing – 10:45 a.m., LOB 202
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0091.html>
- HB 170** (unemployment compensation) – Hearing – 11:00 a.m., LOB 307
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0170.html>
- HB 137** (unemployment benefit eligibility) – Hearing – 1:00 p.m., LOB 307
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0137.html>
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0117.html>
- January 26, 2005 **HB 104** (requiring insurance coverage for infertility treatments) – Hearing – 10:00 a.m., LOB 302
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/legislation/2005/HB0104.html>

Please contact Teresa Rosenberger, Devine, Millimet - (603) 226-1000, or Chris Hodgdon, Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce - (603) 881-8333, if you have any questions.