

# Legislative Tracking & Policy Advocacy

Presentation by Brodie Deshaies  
for the NH Library Trustees Association



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## Introductions and My Experience

What's your name, library you represent (include town), and role at your library?

My name is Brodie Deshaies...

- Legislative Advocate at NHMA
- Former Library Trustee and Treasurer
- Governor Wentworth Regional School Board At Large Member, Chair
- Former State Representative, Carroll County's 6th District (Wolfeboro)
- Formerly a political consultant and project manager



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What are we talking about today?

- How does a bill become a law in NH?
- How do we find relevant bills?
- How do we track bills?
- How can we advocate for or against bills/policies?
- What can we do to raise awareness about policies?



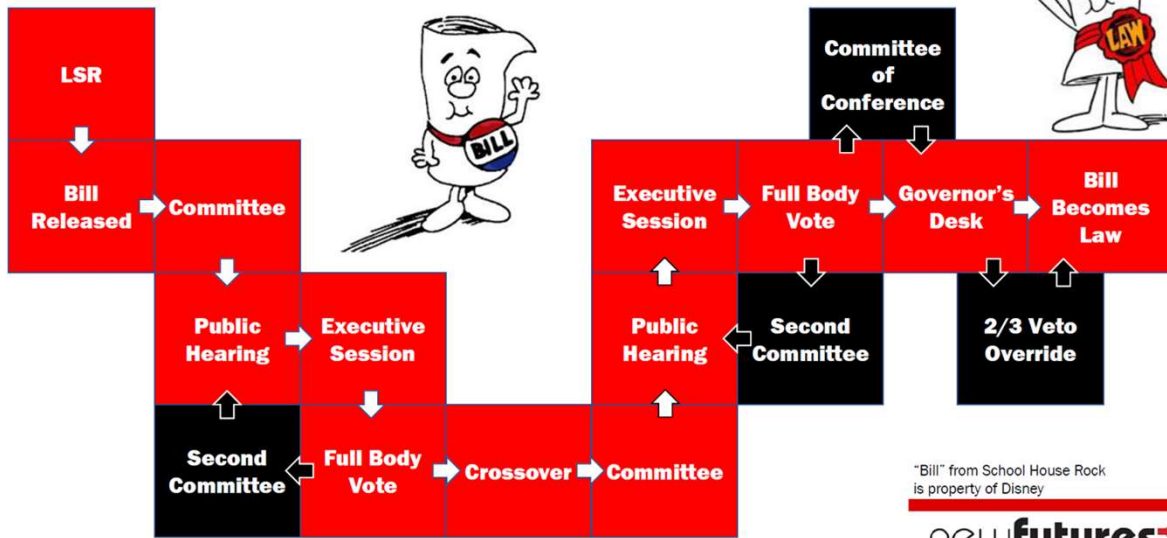
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How does a bill  
become a law?



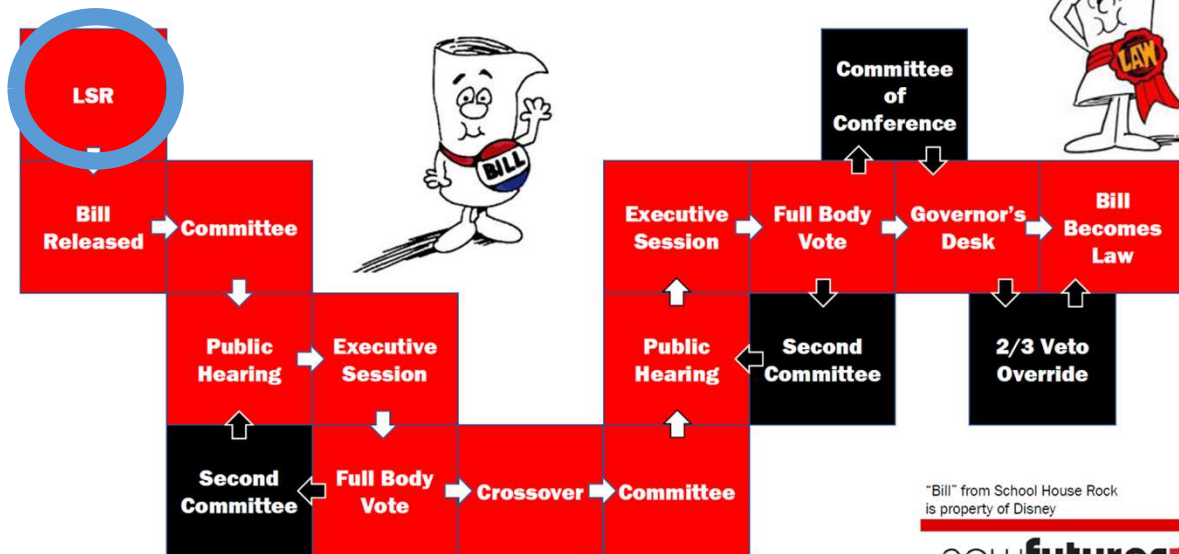
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## How a Bill Becomes a Law



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## How a Bill Becomes a Law



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## Introducing Legislation in New Hampshire

- State Senators and Representatives have an idea for legislation
  - Fixing a problem for constituents, creating a new program, updating regulations, etc
  - Constituents, local officials, special interest or advocacy groups, or it was their idea
  - The legislator who introduces the bill is called the “sponsor”
- There is a filing period---about 1 week---in early-September for State Representatives to file legislation with the Office of Legislative Services
  - During election years, there is also a period after the General Election
- The filing period for State Senators is begins in October and end in November
  - State Senators can also decide when their drafted legislation will become public
- When legislation is first filed, it is called a Legislative Service Request (LSR)
- The LSR receives a number and the language becomes public



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## From a Legislative Service Request to a Bill

- The leader of each legislative chamber---House Speaker and Senate President---reviews the topic matter of each Legislative Service Request (LSR) and assigns the bill to a Standing Committee
  - “Standing Committee[s]” is the official term for committees that exist to review bills
  - Ex. Education, Finance, Ways & Means, Resources & Development, etc
- Once an LSR is assigned to a committee, it receives a bill number
  - Ex. HB123 or SB567
- Bills that are assigned to a committee become the committee’s possession
  - The bill’s sponsors and cosponsors lose control over the bill and its contents



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## The Committee Process

- A Public Hearing is scheduled, and the date and time are posted on the respective chambers meeting schedule
  - [House of Representatives Meeting Schedule](#) and [Senate Meeting Schedule](#)
- A debate and vote, called an Executive Session, is scheduled after the Public Hearing
  - These meetings are also posted on each chamber's respective meeting schedule
  - An Executive Session can be **scheduled for the same day** as a public hearing
  - Amendments to the bill can be considered and voted upon during these meetings
- The Committee Chair decides when to schedule a Public Hearing and an Executive Session for every bill
- The Majority and Minority of the Committee write reports for and against the Committee's recommendation to the entire legislative chamber
- **Bills cannot die in committee in NH! All go to the chamber floor!**



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## Public Hearings

- The public is asked to sign up to speak prior to the Public Hearing
  - The Senate has a sheet where people sign up to speak and indicate their support or opposition
  - The House has little cards that are submitted to the Chair, where people sign up to speak and indicate their support or opposition
- The Chair will call on people who signed up to speak, called "testifying"
- Individuals provide input on the **substance of the bill** and direct their comments to the entire committee
- After providing testimony, individuals can choose to answer any questions from the committee's members
  - These questions usually help state legislators learn about the bill and its intent
- If you sign in for or against a bill, it is kept in the public record with the bill



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## A Second Committee?

- **Oftentimes, yes!**
- Bills will go through a **substantive committee** and the **Finance Committee**
  - This is true for both the House and Senate
- A **substantive committee** addresses the **policies in a bill**
  - This **substantive committee** reviews the bill **first**
  - Ex. Education, Finance, Ways & Means, Resources & Development, etc
- The **Finance Committee** reviews the bill's **costs**
  - They **do not** review the substance of the bill---in theory...
- The Finance Committee also makes a recommendation for the legislative chamber to act upon
  - Like the substantive committees, there is a Majority and Minority report



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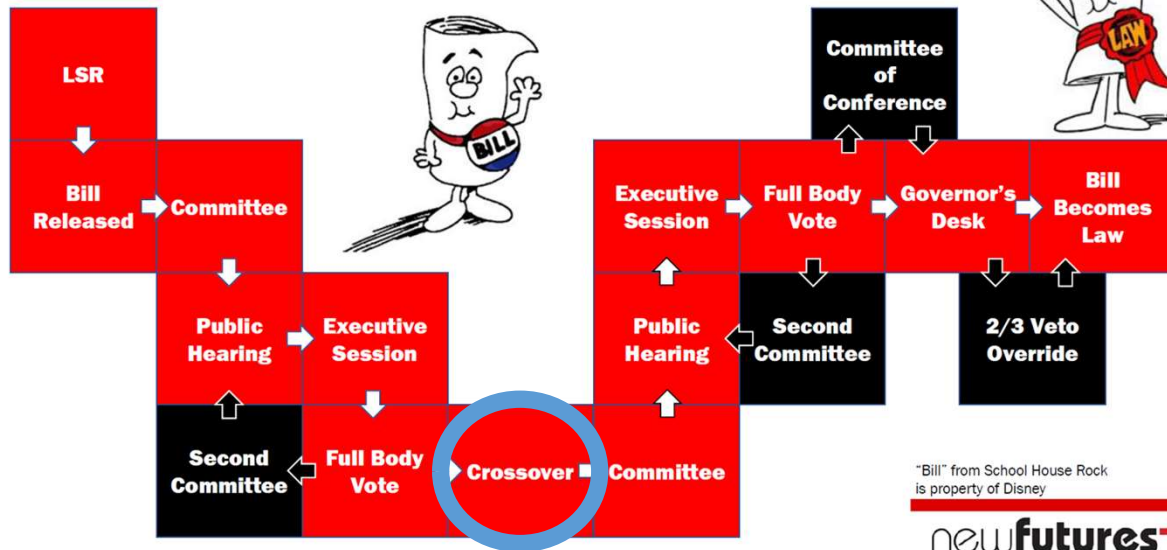
## It took this long for the final Floor Vote?

- **Again, yes!**
- It can take 2-3 months for a bill to pass through the chamber where it was introduced entirely
- Legislators scrutinize bills in a substantive committee, the Finance Committee, and vote two times on their respective chamber's floor
- Many stakeholders---state department heads, professional organizations, lobbyists, people with lived experience, activists, etc---provide input throughout the process
- **It isn't easy to pass a bill through either the Senate or the House**



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## How a Bill Becomes a Law



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## Crossover!

- The House and Senate have a deadline for when bills must leave their chamber
- This deadline ensures state legislators complete their work in a timely manner during the legislative session
- Once a bill passes the chamber where it was introduced, it "crosses over" to the other chamber
- **Everything that was done previously is now done in the opposite chamber**



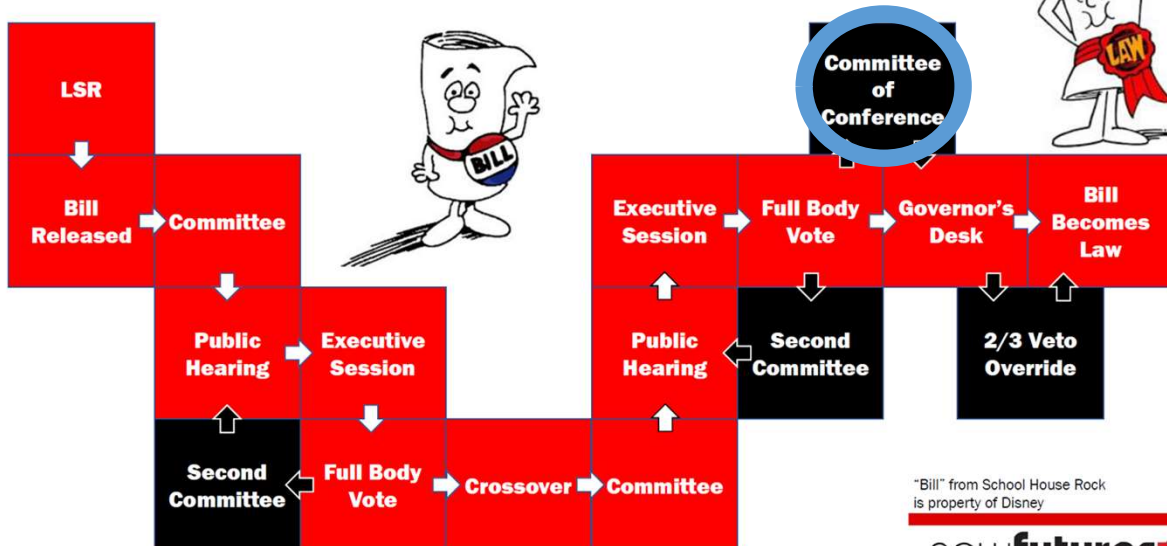
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The bill has made it this far?



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## How a Bill Becomes a Law



"Bill" from School House Rock  
is property of Disney

newfutures



16



## Committees of Conference

- A Committee of Conference is convened when the House and Senate pass different versions of the same bill, and both chambers vote to establish a Committee of Conference
- The Committee of Conference's purpose is to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate bills and propose a compromise to both chambers
- Committees of Conferences have 3 Senators and 4 Representatives
  - 2 Senators from the majority party and 1 from the minority party
  - 2-3 Representatives from the majority party and 1-2 from the minority party
  - The Senate President and House Speaker assign members to the committee
- For a report to be recommended, **the committee must be unanimous**
  - Otherwise, if the deadline passes, the bill dies



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Survived that?



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# Onto the FINAL House and Senate Floor Votes...



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## The Final Steps...

- You've survived the Committee of Conference and final floor votes, or you got lucky and passed both chambers without needing a Committee of Conference
- The Senate President and House Speaker sign the bill
- The bill is reviewed by a committee that addresses any grammatical errors
  - They do not make any substantive changes!
- The Secretary of State enrolls the bill and sends it to the Governor's office
- The Governor must take action in 10 days, or the bill automatically becomes law
- This entire process can sometimes take a month



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THE BILL IS SIGNED  
INTO LAW!



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But...



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Did the Governor just  
veto your bill?



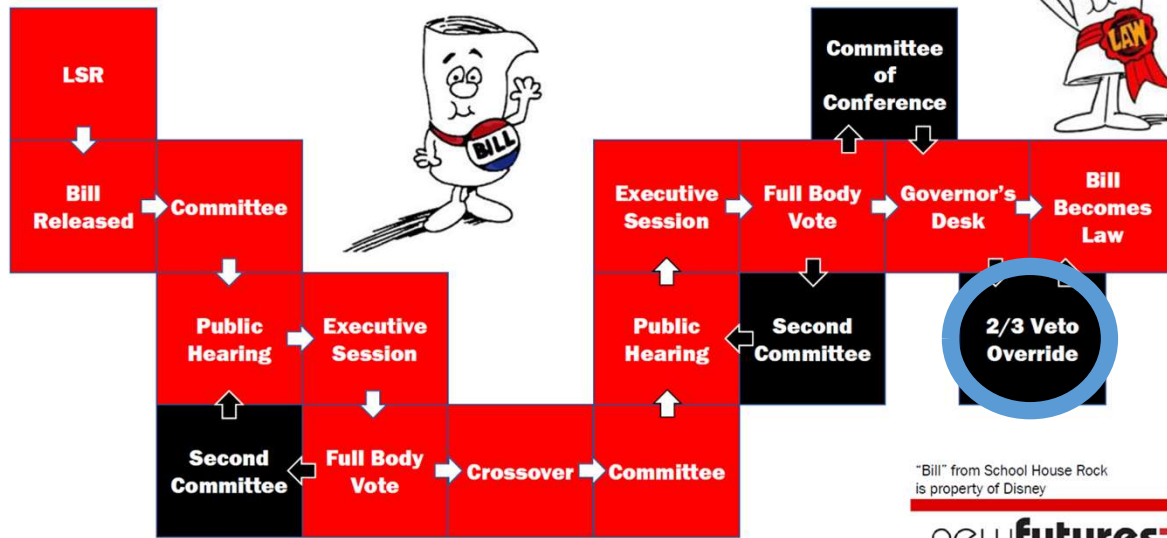
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You need a... VETO  
OVERRIDE!



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## How a Bill Becomes a Law



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## VETO DAY!

- (Usually) happens in the first couple of weeks of September each year
- All the vetoed bills are voted on **again** by the House and Senate
- 2/3s of the Senate and 2/3s of the House must vote in support of the bill to override the Governor's veto
- If the Governor's veto is overridden, the bill becomes law
- Veto overrides are very rare and take much bipartisan cooperation



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[illegible]

"Bill" from School House Rock  
is property of Disney

new**futures**➔

# YOUR BILL IS NOW LAW!



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## Why is knowing the process important?

- How can you track what you don't understand or know?
- Different parts of the process require waiting, and others require involvement
  - When is the best time to contact your local state legislators?
  - When is it best to contact members of a committee reviewing a bill?
  - When is it opportune to engage/educate your community to advocate for or against a bill?
  - How will you know you were successful or need to continue advocating?
- And, you can share this knowledge with the Board of Trustees, Library Director, staff, patrons, and other interested stakeholders!



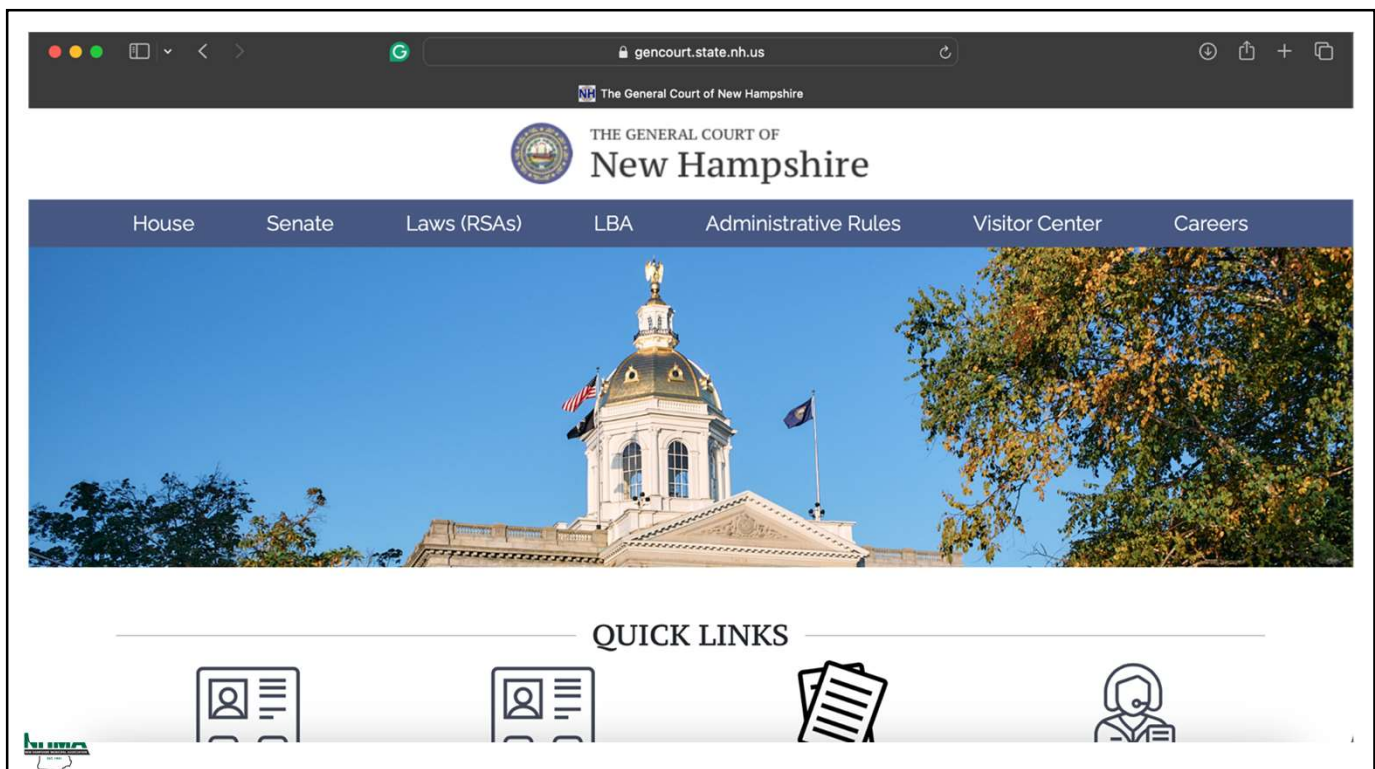
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## How to find bills we want to track

- **Always start with the [General Court website](#)** to receive the most accurate and up-to-date information on all bills
- Scroll down to the **“CURRENT BILLS”** section on the left side of the page
- Under the **“Find A Bill”** subsection, click **Advanced Bill Search**
- Enter key terms that may be related to your legislative/policy interests in the **“Title Search”**
  - **Examples might include:** “Library,” “Books,” “Literature,” “Divisive concepts,” “Inappropriate materials,” etc
- You can also use the **“Bill Text Search”** beneath the **“Find A Bill”** subsection
  - It’s not as effective as the advanced search

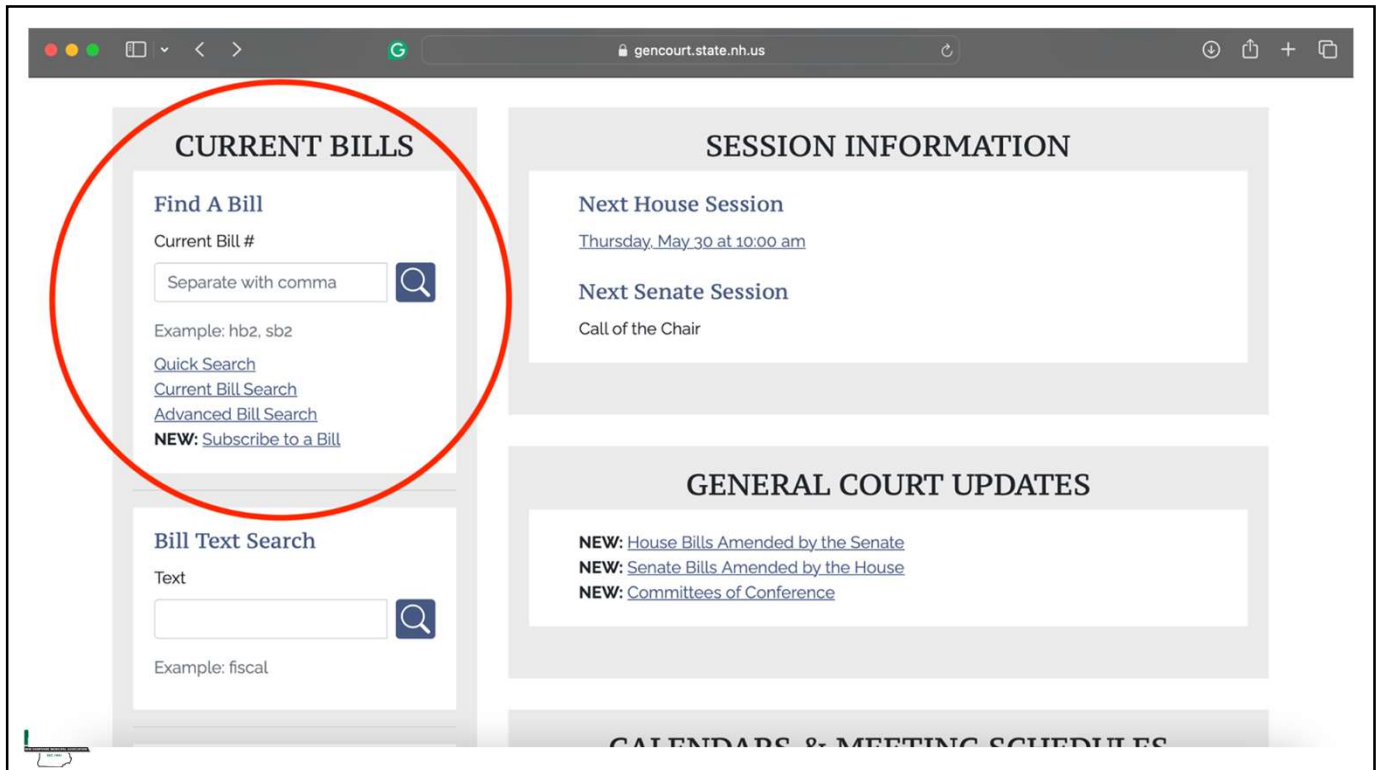


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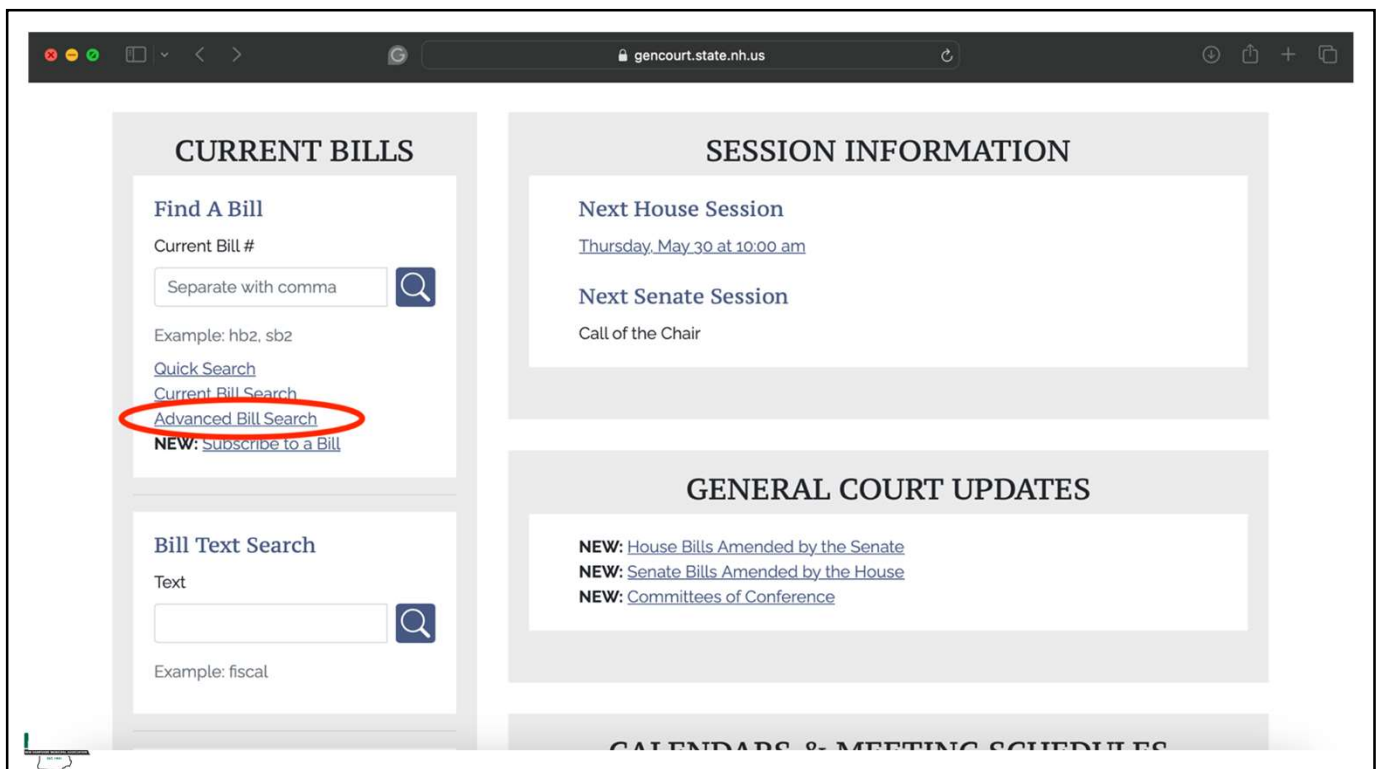


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gencourt.state.nh.us

The General Court of New Hampshire

NH General Court - Bill Status

### General Court of New Hampshire Advanced Bill Status Search

[General Court of NH Home](#)  
[View Past Member's Legislation](#)

Session Year: 2024 1989-Current  
 Title Search: tax, fish  
 Bill Number: hb34,sb450  
 Committee: -Select Committee-  
 Comm. Ref: -Select Committee-  
 House Status: -Select Status-  
 Hse Flr/Session Day: MM/DD/YYYY  
 Hse Amended:   
 Sponsor:   
 Chapter #: 0001,0045  
☐ All Senate Rereferred ☐ All House Retained  
☐ All Bills With Appropriations

Origin Body: Both  
 General Status: -Select Codes-  
 LSR Number: 1,56,235  
 Sen Committee: -Select Committee-  
 Sen Comm Ref: -Select Committee-  
 Senate Status: -Select Status-  
 Sen Flr/Session Day: MM/DD/YYYY  
 Sen Amended:   
 Last Comm Rpt:   
 Comm Hearing Date: MM/DD/YYYY  
☐ All Bills With Fiscal Note  
☐ Local Government Bills

Submit Reset

\*\*\* Select radio button to sort by that field.  
 NH House NH Senate

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gencourt.state.nh.us

The General Court of New Hampshire

NH General Court - Bill Status

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Session Year: 2024 1989-Current  
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Submit Reset

\*\*\* Select radio button to sort by that field.  
 NH House NH Senate

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gencourt.state.nh.us

The General Court of New Hampshire

General Court of NH - Bill Status System  
Search Results

Click to Type a Header

Bills Found : 2

**HB1308**  
Session Year 2024  
Bill Docket  
Bill Status  
Bill Text[HTML] [PDF]  
Roll Calls

**Title:** relative to parent access to children's library records.  
**G-Status:** HOUSE  
**House Status:** INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE  
**Senate Status:**  
**Next/Last Comm:** HouseChildren and Family Law  
**Next/Last Hearing:** 01/30/2024 at 11:00 AM LOB Room 206-208

**SB475 -FN**  
Session Year 2024  
Bill Docket  
Bill Status  
Bill Text[HTML] [PDF]

**Title:** relative to design of a climate-controlled storage facility for the New Hampshire state library.  
**G-Status:** SENATE  
**House Status:**  
**Senate Status:** INTERIM STUDY  
**Next/Last Comm:** Senate Finance  
**Next/Last Hearing:** 02/01/2024 at 10:00 AM SH Room 103

NH House NH Senate

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## How do we know if a bill is worth tracking?

- **Read the bill** and see how it could impact your mission, values, or work
  - If you are confused by the bill's language, contact yours or your town/city legal counsel
  - Also, contact the NH Library Trustees Association or the NH Municipal Association
- Consider how a bill may **impact important stakeholders**, too
  - **Some examples...**
  - Do you have full-time employees paying into the state's pension program?
  - Is the state creating some new *cause of action* that could impact your employees?
  - Are patrons' private information or individual liberty at risk?
  - Is the state changing the way a Board of Trustees can govern the library?
  - Is the state restricting investment freedoms for public entities?
- **Talk with other boards** in your town, in case it is a commonly shared concern
  - Other boards may already be following a bill!



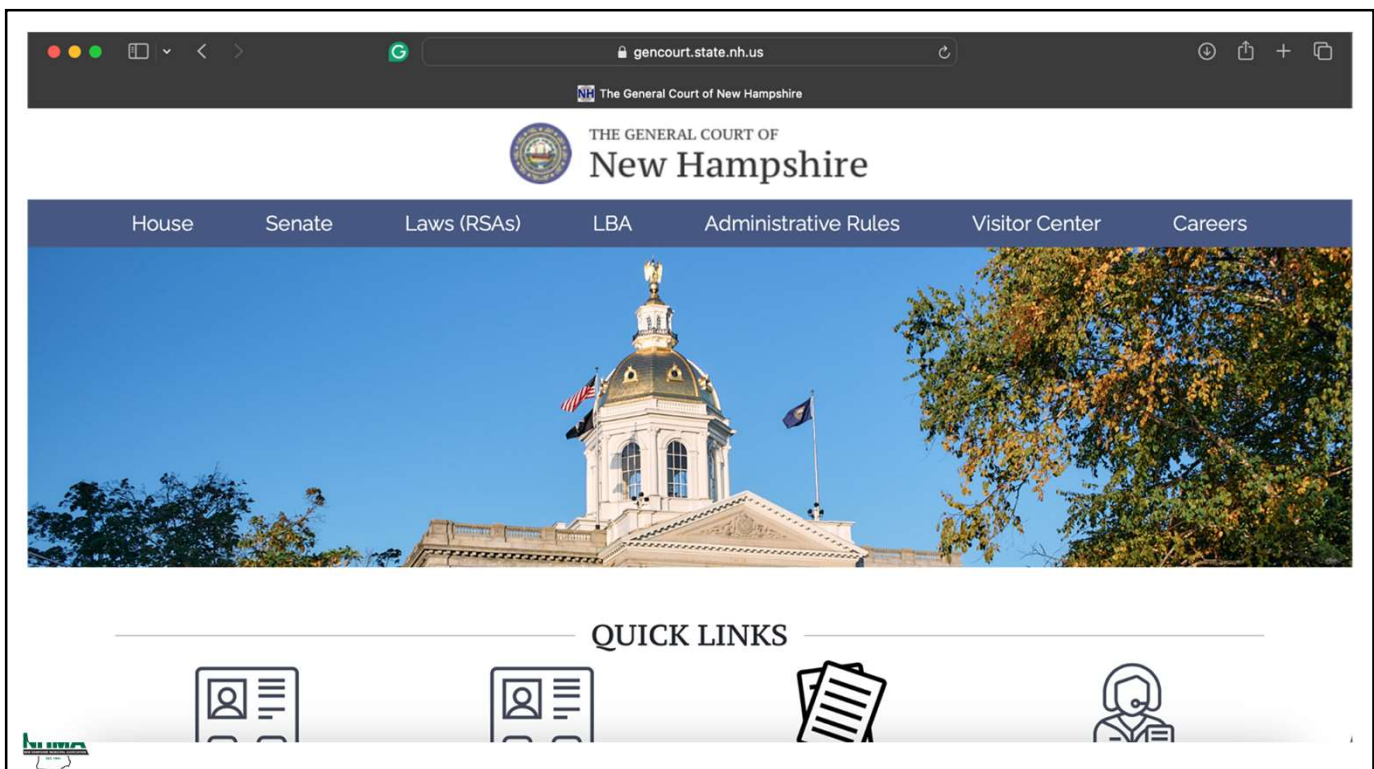
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## How do we track a bill?

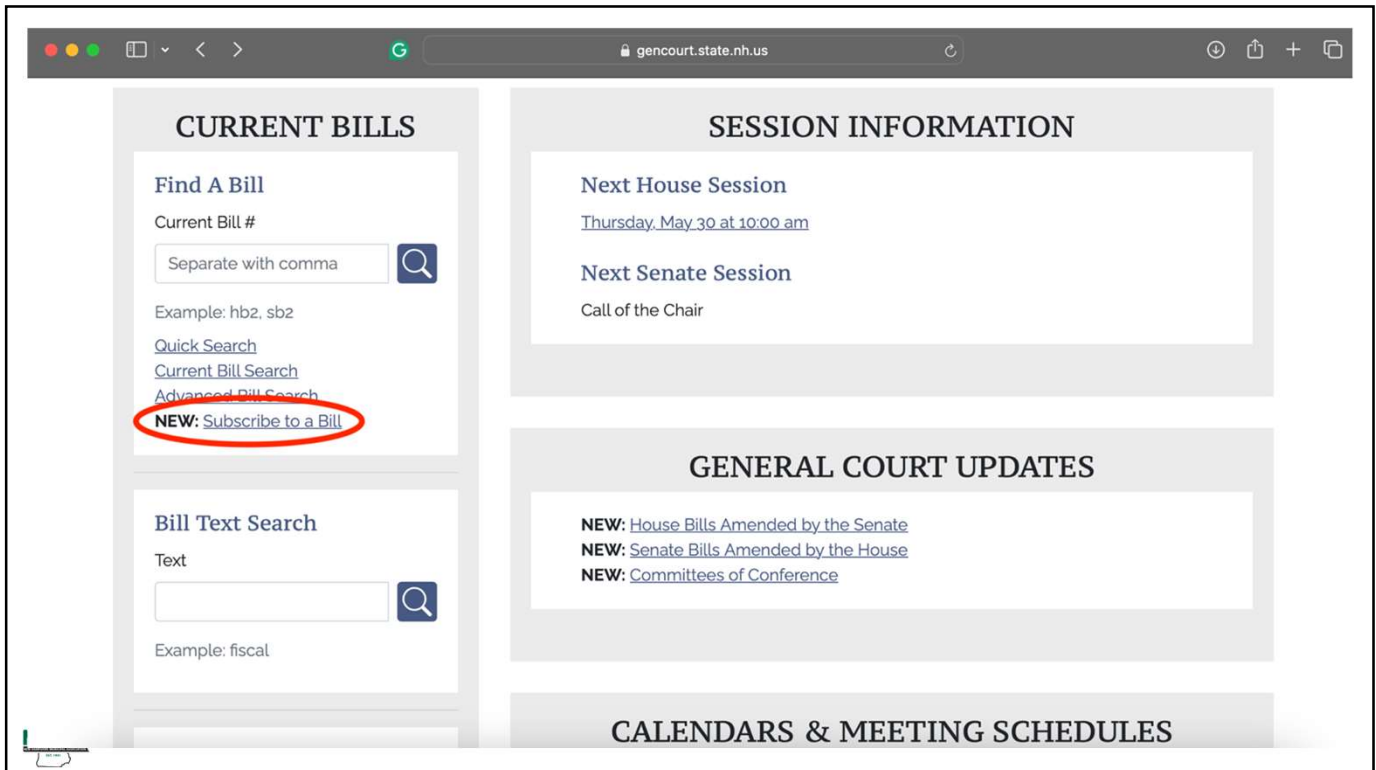
- There are many ways you can consider!
  1. Use the General Court's **"Subscribe to a Bill"** function
  2. Pay for a **computer software** that tracks state legislation
  3. **Pay a lobbyist** to track and advocate for bills
    - a. I do not personally advise publicly-funded libraries to go this route
    - b. Might be worth considering if your library is completely privately funded
  4. **Manually follow** each individual bill on the **General Court website** and by subscribing to the **Senate and House Calendars**
- I would personally recommend using the the General Court's **"Subscribe to a Bill"** function
  - Receive automated emails regularly updating you on the bill's status



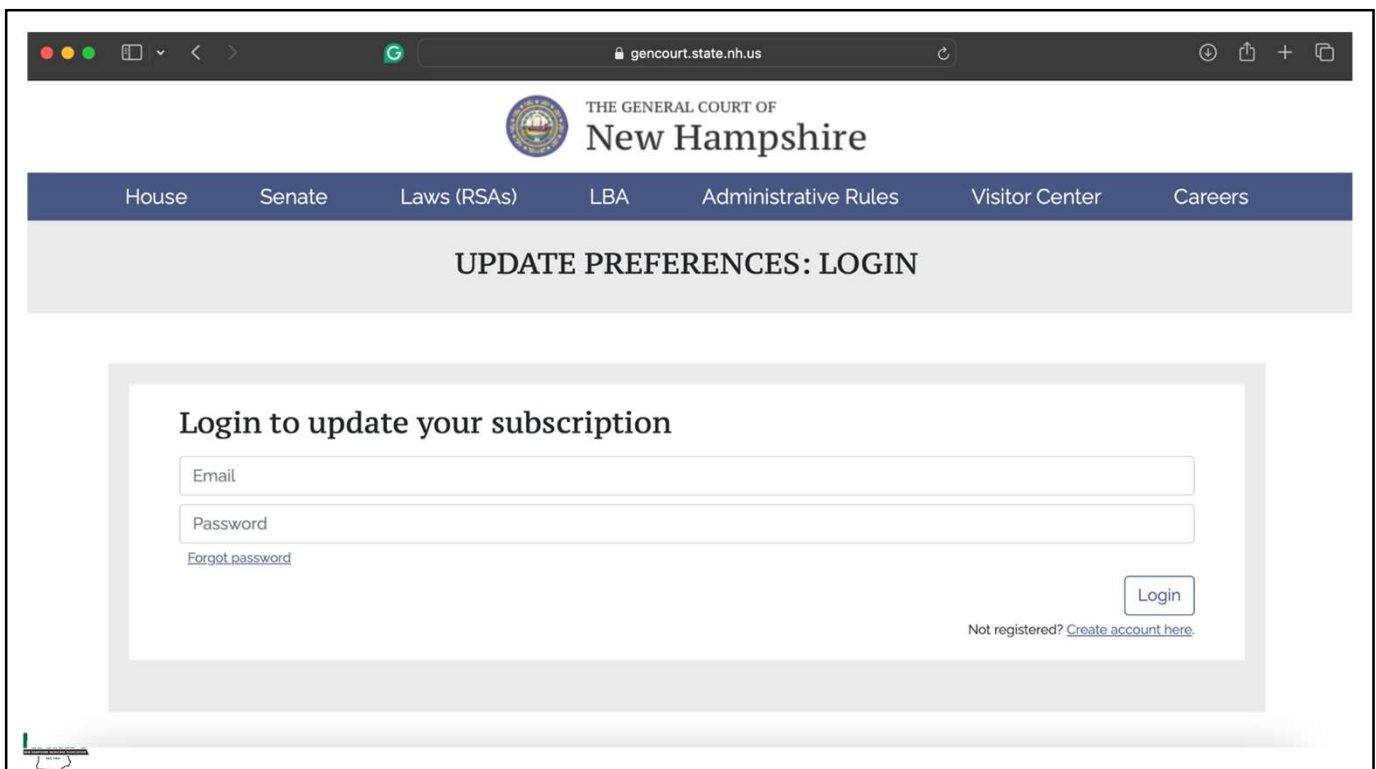
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The screenshot shows the website of the New Hampshire General Court. The header includes the court's name and a navigation bar with links to House, Senate, Laws (RSAs), LBA, Administrative Rules, Visitor Center, and Careers. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "UPDATE PREFERENCES: LOGIN". The main content area contains a login form with fields for Email and Password, a "Forgot password" link, and a "Login" button. A red circle highlights the "Create account here" link next to the "Not registered?" text.

gencourt.state.nh.us

THE GENERAL COURT OF  
New Hampshire

House Senate Laws (RSAs) LBA Administrative Rules Visitor Center Careers

UPDATE PREFERENCES: LOGIN

Login to update your subscription

Email

Password

[Forgot password](#)

Not registered? [Create account here](#)

Login

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The screenshot shows the "BILL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT" page on the New Hampshire General Court website. The header and navigation bar are the same as in the previous screenshot. The main content area features a section titled "BILL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT" with a disclaimer about email notifications. Below this are two subscription forms: "Subscribe to Bill" and "Subscribe to Subject". The "Subscribe to Bill" form has a text input field with the example "HB132" and an "Add Bill" button. The "Subscribe to Subject" form has a dropdown menu with "Agency Appropriations" selected and an "Add Subject to Subscription" button. At the bottom, there is a section titled "Your Subscriptions".

gencourt.state.nh.us

THE GENERAL COURT OF  
New Hampshire

House Senate Laws (RSAs) LBA Administrative Rules Visitor Center Careers

BILL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT

By signing up below, you agree to receive up to 3 email notifications a day (6:00am, 12:00pm, 6:00pm ET) from [reply@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:reply@leg.state.nh.us) when the bill(s) and/or subject(s) you select are updated.

Subscribe to Bill

If you do not know the bill number, please [click here to search](#). (Opens in new window.)

example: HB132 [Add Bill](#)

Subscribe to Subject

Agency Appropriations [Add Subject to Subscription](#)

Your Subscriptions

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gencourt.state.nh.us

THE GENERAL COURT OF  
**New Hampshire**

House Senate Laws (RSAs) LBA Administrative Rules Visitor Center Careers

## BILL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT

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Agency Appropriations Add Subject to Subscription

### Your Subscriptions

nhma

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### Your Subscriptions

nhma

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gencourt.state.nh.us

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example: HB132 Add Bill

**Subscribe to Subject**  
Agency Appropriations Add Subject to Subscription

### Your Subscriptions

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gencourt.state.nh.us

Agency Appropriations Add Subject to Subscription

## Your Subscriptions

If you wish to stop receiving email on a specific bill(s) / subject(s), check the box(es) below and click the 'unsubscribe' button. Bills will only be followed during their assigned biennium. Subjects will be followed until you choose otherwise.

**Bills for 2023-2024:**

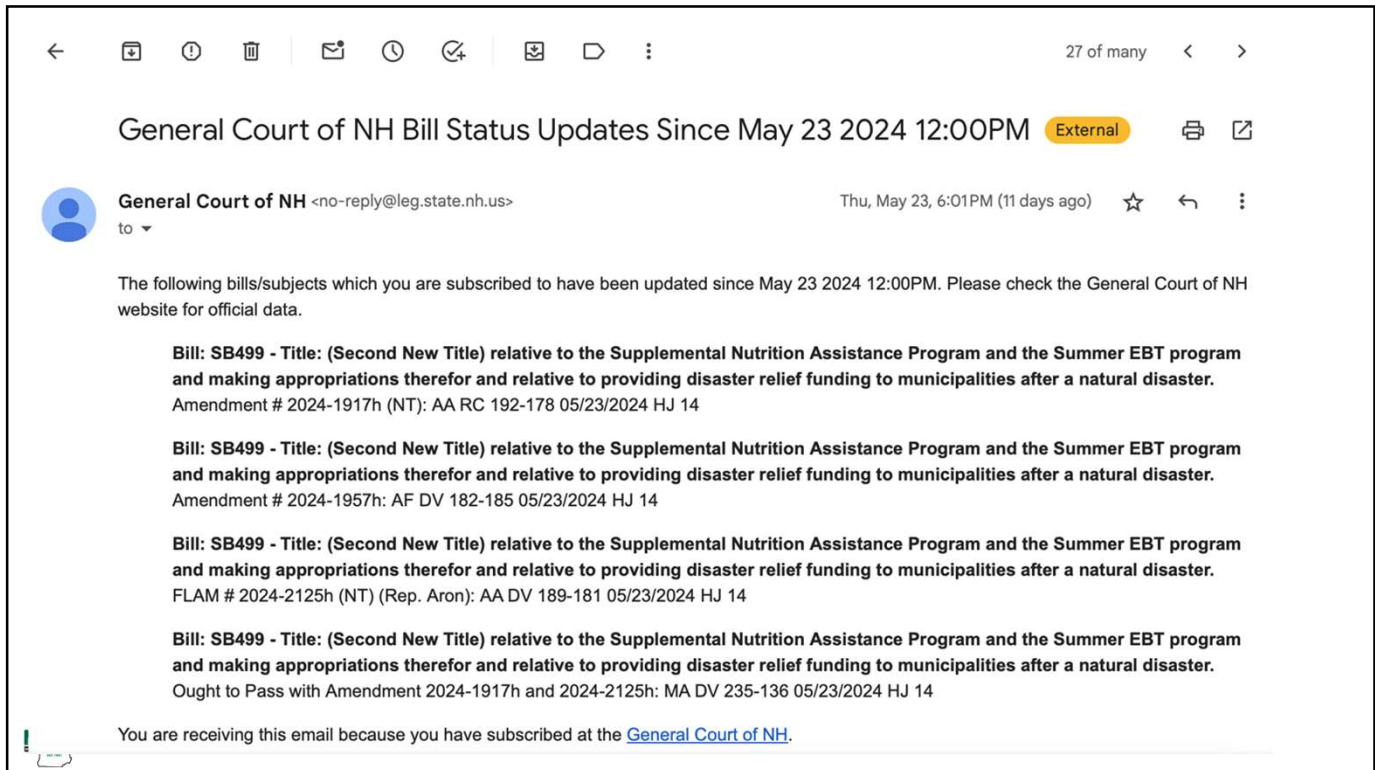
- ☐ **HB1212 - Title:** relative to eligibility for free school meals.
- ☐ **HB1278 - Title:** (New Title) relative to qualifying medical conditions for purposes of therapeutic cannabis; and relative to the summer EBT program, the SNAP elderly simplified application and the school lunch program and making appropriations therefor.
- ☐ **HB1422 - Title:** relative to the rates of the business profits tax, business enterprise tax, communications service tax, and meals and rooms tax.
- ☐ **HB1678 - Title:** establishing a New Hampshire farm to school local food incentive pilot program.
- ☐ **HB572 - Title:** relative to eligibility for free school meals.
- ☐ **HB601 - Title:** relative to state participation in the Medicaid direct certification program for free and reduced price school meals.
- ☐ **SB337 - Title:** relative to doula and lactation service provider certification.
- ☐ **SB351 - Title:** relative to statewide work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents on food stamps.
- ☐ **SB499 - Title:** relative to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Summer EBT program and making appropriations therefor and relative to providing disaster relief funding to municipalities after a natural disaster.

**No Subjects Currently Followed**

Unsubscribe from Checked Selections Manage Calendar Subscriptions Logout

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## A Bill's Docket!

- An ongoing list of the bill's status
  - Provides dates, times, and places for Public Hearings, Executive Sessions, and Floor votes
  - Documents all voting results during the legislative process
- Provides you with a location for reading the Majority and Minority reports in the House or Senate Calendars
  - This can provide context for state legislators' thinking or feelings on a bill
- Documents the House or Senate Journal, where you can read about the debate and the final vote outcome during each step
  - Votes are all listed in the docket, too
- All amendments are documented in the docket



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gencourt.state.nh.us

The General Court of New Hampshire

General Court of NH - Bill Status System Search Results

Click to Type a Header

Bills Found : 2

**HB1308**  
 Session Year 2024  
 Bill Docket  
 Bill Status  
 Bill Text[HTML] [PDF]  
 Roll Calls

**Title:** relative to parent access to children's library records.  
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NH House NH Senate

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gencourt.state.nh.us

The General Court of New Hampshire

General Court of NH - Bill Status System Search Results

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NH House NH Senate

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The screenshot shows the 'General Court of New Hampshire - Bill Status System' website. The main heading is 'Docket of HB1308'. Below it, the 'Bill Title' is 'relative to parent access to children's library records.' The 'Official Docket of HB1308' is displayed as a table with the following data:

Date	Body	Description
12/6/2023	H	<b>Introduced</b> 01/03/2024 and referred to Children and Family Law <b>HJ 1</b>
1/17/2024	H	Public Hearing: 01/30/2024 11:00 am LOB 206-208
1/31/2024	H	Executive Session: 02/13/2024 02:00 pm LOB 206-208
2/14/2024	H	Majority Committee Report: Inexpedient to Legislate 02/13/2024 ( <b>Vote 13-2; RC) HC 9 P. 17</b> )
2/14/2024	H	Minority Committee Report: Ought to Pass with Amendment <b>#2024-0585h</b>
3/7/2024	H	Inexpedient to Legislate: MA <b>RC 194-170</b> 03/07/2024 <b>HJ 7</b>

Navigation links include 'Previous Bill', 'Result List', and 'Next Bill'. The page also features links for 'NH General Court', 'New Query', 'FAQs', 'Bill Status', and 'Bill Text'.

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## How do we advocate for or against bills?

- Contact your state legislators about any bill(s)!
  - Call, email, send a postcard or letter
- Write a letter to the newspaper
  - Called a "Letter to the Editor"
  - Keep it short and non-accusatory
  - The goal should be to educate the public and state legislators
- Attend a Public Hearing or submit written testimony
  - Respectfully speak directly to a committee of state legislators
  - Submit written testimony through the online House and Senate portals
- Encourage others to get involved!
  - Engage your patrons and Friends!

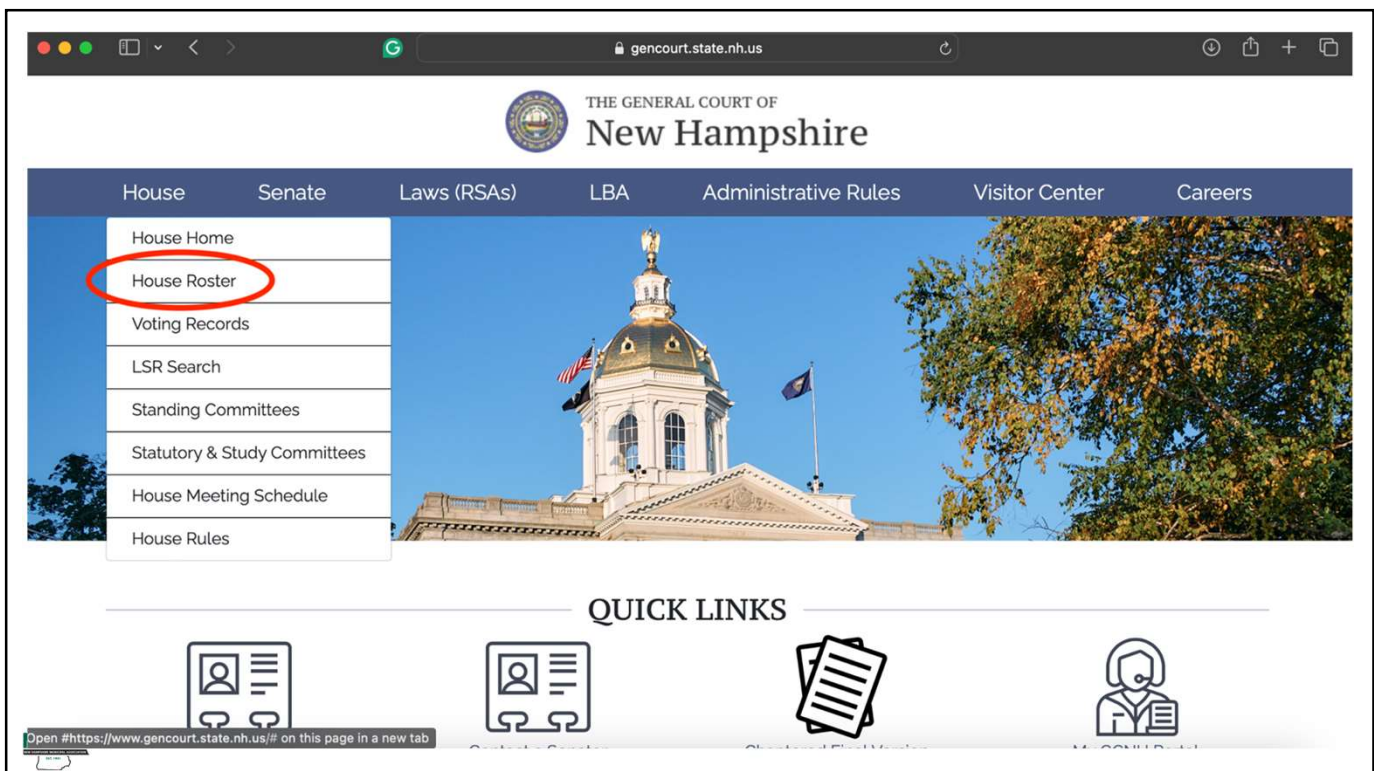


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# How to find my state legislators



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The screenshot shows the homepage of the New Hampshire General Court website. The browser address bar displays `gencourt.state.nh.us`. The main navigation bar includes links for House, Senate, Laws (RSAs), LBA, Administrative Rules, Visitor Center, and Careers. A dropdown menu for the Senate is open, with the "Senate Roster" link circled in red. Other links in the dropdown include Senate Home, Who's My Senator, Voting Records, Senate Leadership, District Maps, Standing Committees, Statutory & Study Committees, and Senate Meeting Schedule. Below the navigation bar is a large banner image of the New Hampshire State Capitol dome. Underneath the banner is a "QUICK LINKS" section with four icons: a person at a desk, a person at a computer, a document, and a person with a headset. A small tooltip is visible over the first icon, displaying the URL `https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/senate/members/senate_roster.aspx`.

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The screenshot shows the "NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE MEMBERS" page. The page has a light gray header with the title "NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE MEMBERS". Below the header, there are two main sections. The left section, titled "ROSTER", contains a dropdown menu labeled "Select a Member -->" and a "Roster Downloads" section with links for "Text Delimited", "Excel Microsoft 2003", and "Excel Microsoft 365". Below this is a "Districts" section with links for "Districts Map (pdf)" and "Districts List (pdf)". The right section, titled "DISCOVER A TOWN OR CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE", contains a dropdown menu labeled "Select a town" and "Select a Town -->". Below this is a map of New Hampshire showing its districts. The districts are labeled: Coos, Grafton, Carroll, and Belknap. The map also shows the borders with Vermont to the west and Maine to the east.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE MEMBERS

**ROSTER**

Select a Member -->

**Roster Downloads**

[Text Delimited](#)  
[Excel Microsoft 2003](#)  
[Excel Microsoft 365](#)

**Districts**

[Districts Map \(pdf\)](#)  
[Districts List \(pdf\)](#)

**SEARCH BY SEAT**

**DISCOVER A TOWN OR CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE**

Select a town

Or use map below to find which Member's represent a town

Map labels: Vermont, Coos, Grafton, Carroll, Belknap, Maine

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NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE MEMBERS

**ROSTER**

✓ Select a Member -->

- Abare, Kimberly
- Abbott, Michael
- Alexander, Joe
- Almy, Susan
- Ames, Richard
- Ammon, Keith
- Andrus, Louise
- Ankarberg, Aidan
- Aron, Judy
- Aures, Cyril
- Avellani, Lino
- Aylward, Deborah
- Bailey, Glenn
- Balboni, Peggy
- Baldwin, Heather

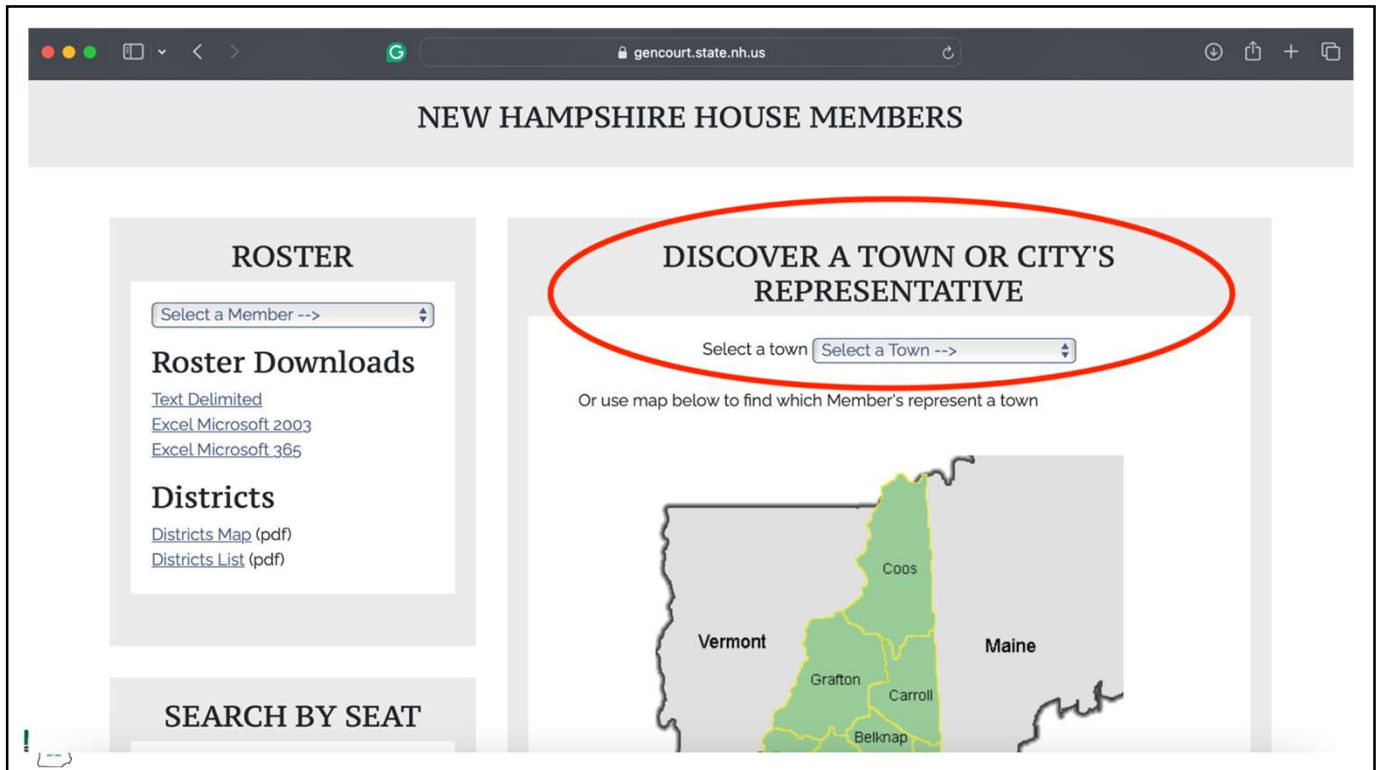
**DISCOVER A TOWN OR CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE**

Select a town

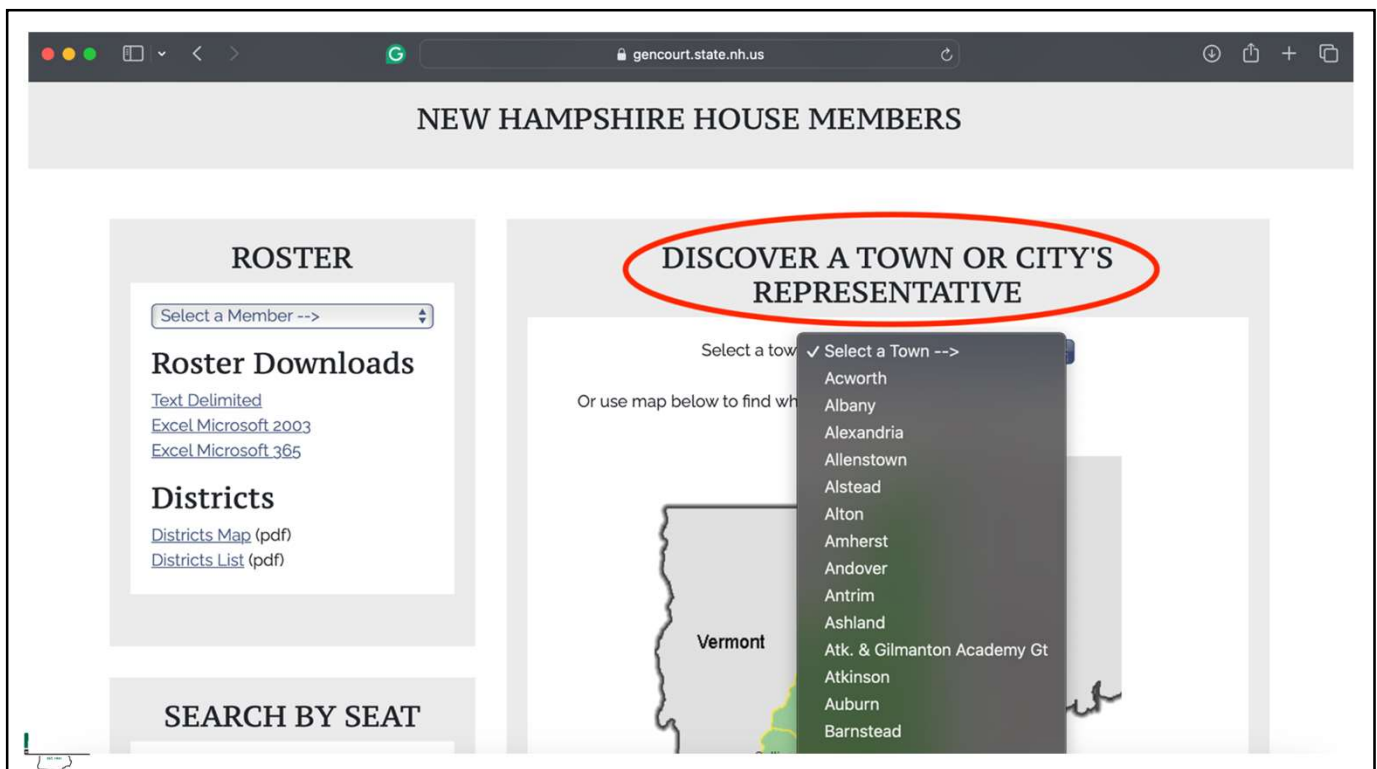
Or use map below to find which Member's represent a town

Map labels: Vermont, Coos, Grafton, Carroll, Belknap, Maine

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The screenshot shows the website [gencourt.state.nh.us](http://gencourt.state.nh.us) with a browser window. The page is divided into two main columns.

**Left Column:**

- ROSTER**
  - Select a Member -->
  - Roster Downloads**
    - [Text Delimited](#)
    - [Excel Microsoft 2003](#)
    - [Excel Microsoft 365](#)
  - Districts**
    - [Districts Map \(pdf\)](#)
    - [Districts List \(pdf\)](#)
- SEARCH BY SEAT**
  - Choose the section/seat number from the dropdown below.
  - Select a Seat -->

**Right Column:**

- DISCOVER A TOWN OR CITY'S REPRESENTATIVE**
  - Select a town: **Wolfeboro**
  -  NH Map
  - Representatives for Wolfeboro**
    - District 6**
      - [John T. MacDonald](#): PO Box 968 Wolfeboro Falls, NH 03894
      - [Katy Peternei](#): 139 Trotting Track Road Wolfeboro, NH 03894-4828
    - District 7**
      - [Glenn Cordelli](#): PO Box 209 Tuftonboro, NH 03816-0209
  - State Senator for Wolfeboro**
    - District 03**
      - [Senator Bradley](#): State House  
Room 302 107 North Main Street Concord NH 03301

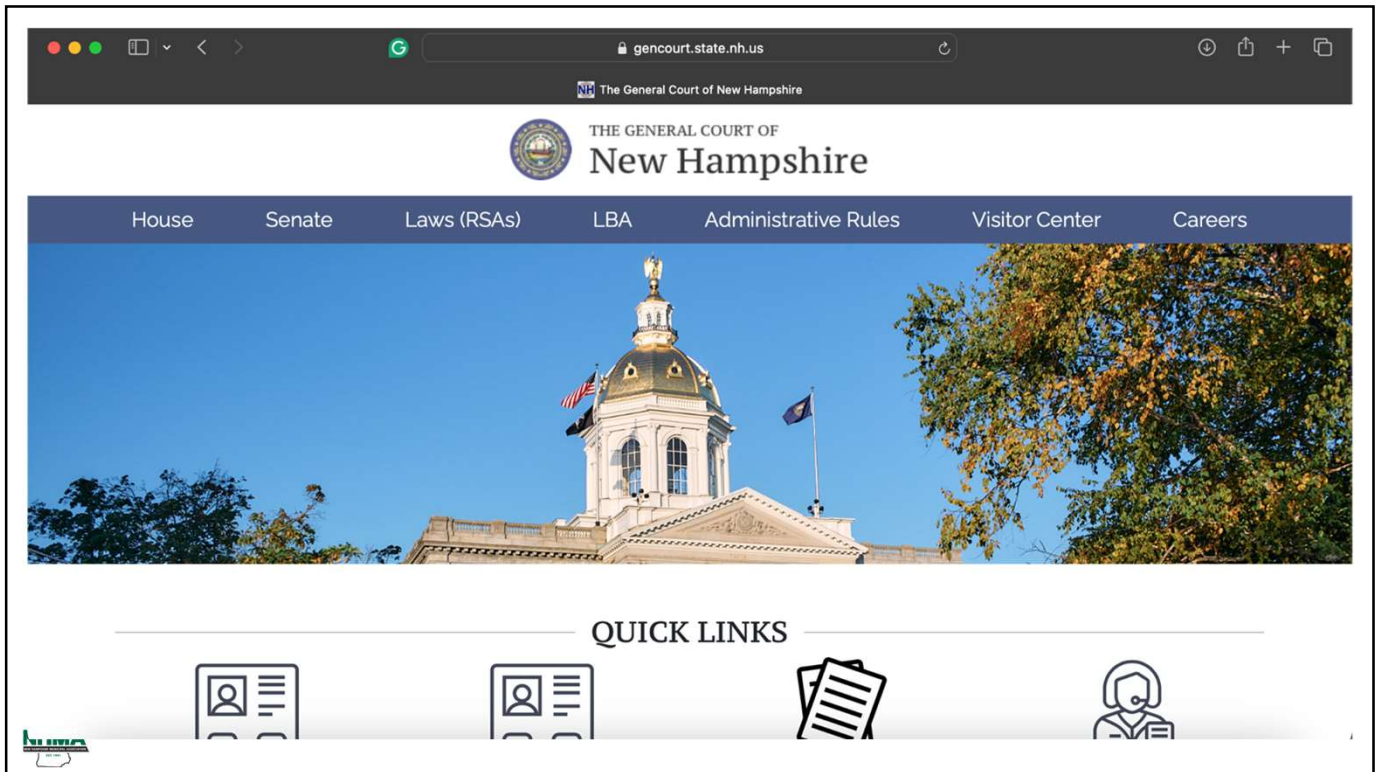
63

How to find directions  
for submitting  
testimony online

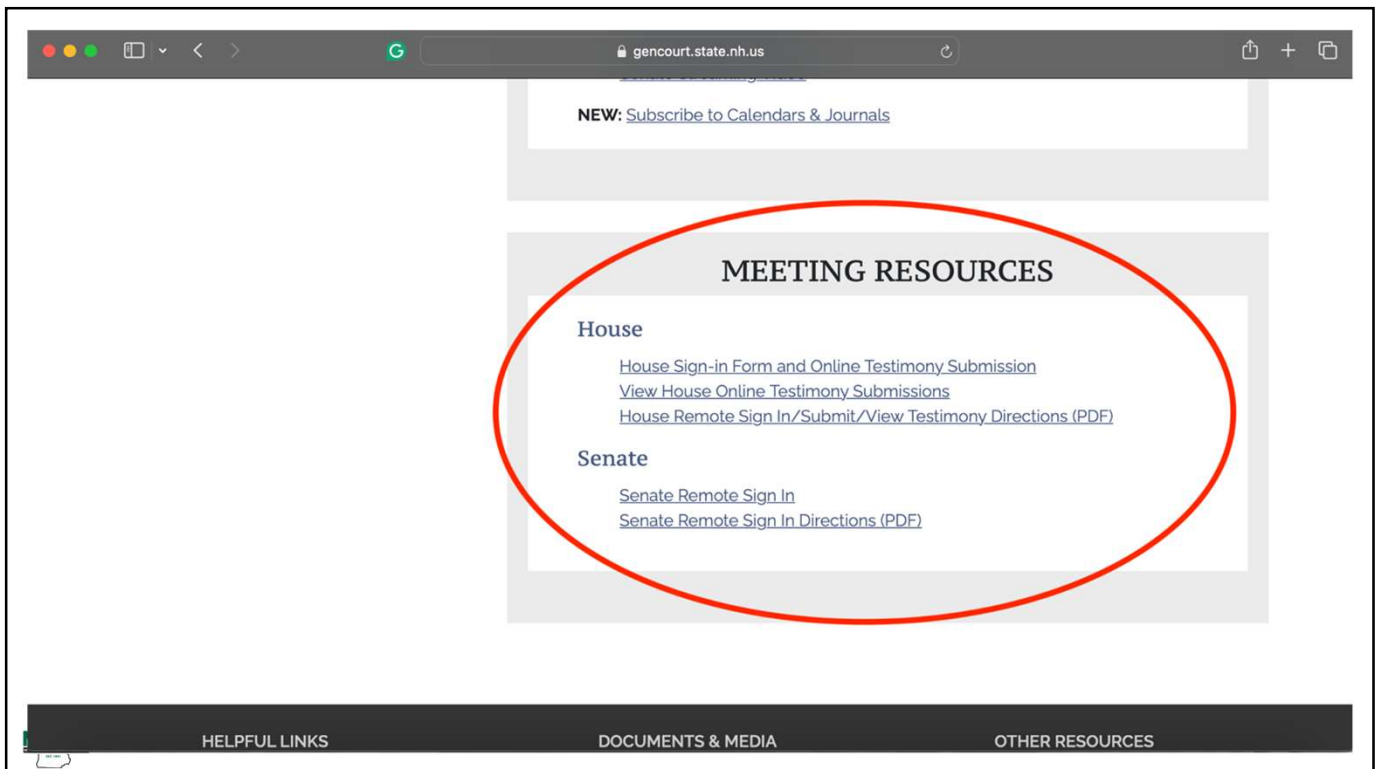


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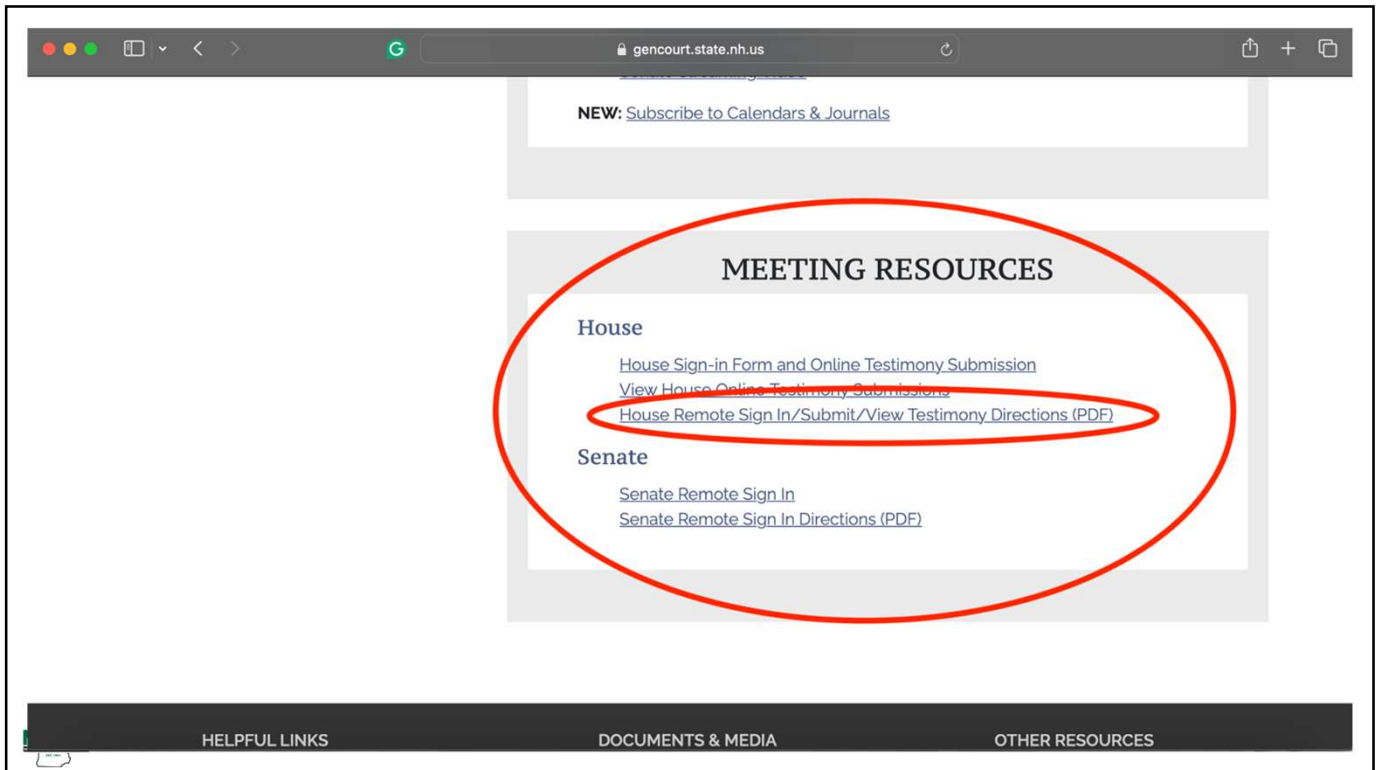




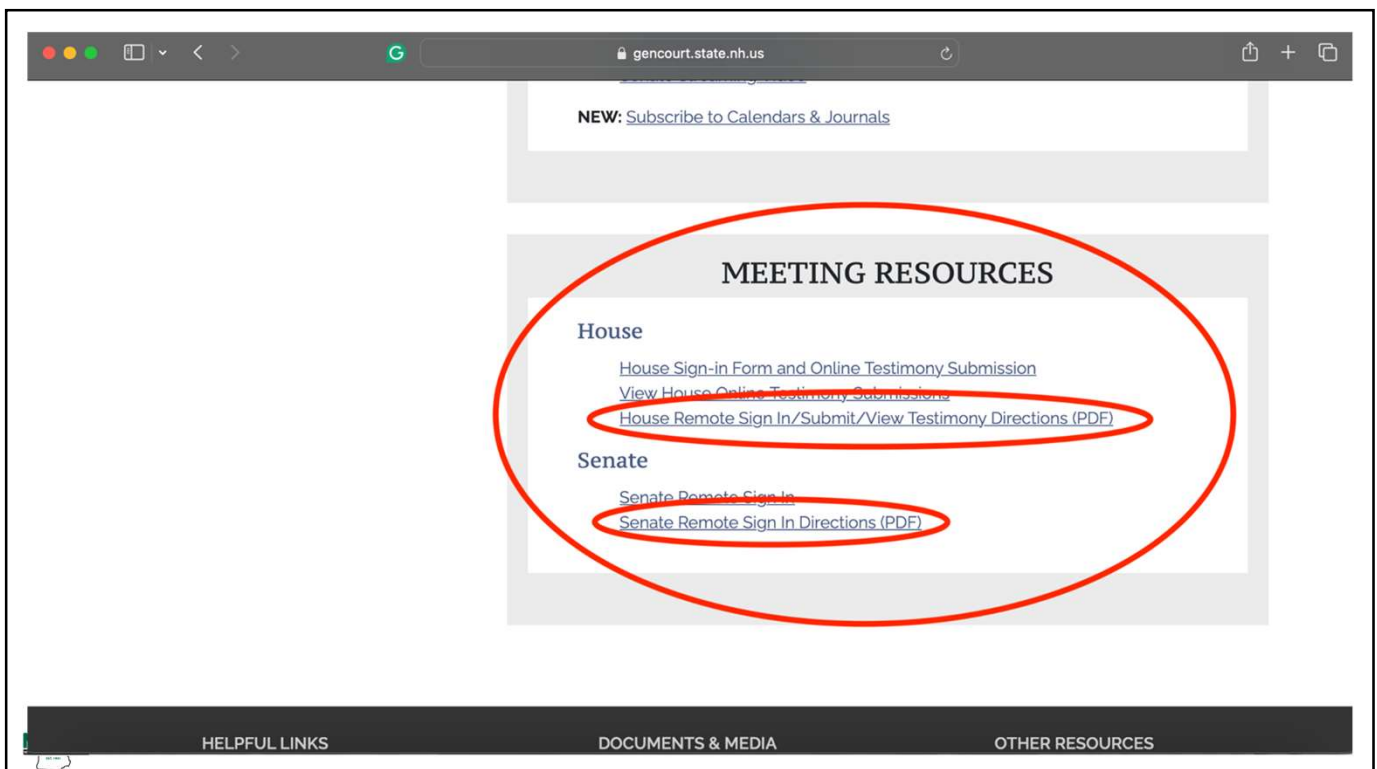
65



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## Raising awareness about bills / public policy

- Have a brief legislative update at every Board of Trustees meeting
- Invite state legislators to a Board of Trustees meeting to discuss legislation
  - Plan with them well in advance!
  - Be flexible because their schedules are very busy
- Engage Library Friends, patrons, and other partners
  - Plan an event to educate the public on policies or issues
  - Invite a speaker from the NH Municipal Association or another organization to present
  - Invite state legislators so they are engaged and educated
- Encourage supporters or Library Trustees to start a letter-writing campaign
  - Find strong supporters who will submit letters to the paper over an extended time period
  - Make sure it is a new person each week or day the newspaper comes out
- Consider utilizing social media, too!



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Thank you!                      Any Questions?

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- Phone: (603) 230-3308



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