

SPRING 2022



Association of Counties



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2022 Annual Conference Hosted by Merrimack County



Save the date for the New Hampshire Association of Counties' 2022 Annual Conference, Oct. 2 – 4 2022 in Portsmouth, NH! The Conference is hosted by Merrimack County. The Conference will feature a variety of expert speakers that will explore topical and practical subjects in plenary and educational sessions throughout the Conference. This year, the conference will offer break-out sessions, plenary sessions, and social events.

Check out the Conference homepage for hotel and schedule information at www.nhcounties.org/annual-conference.

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Crossover Legislative Update

The New Hampshire Legislature has completed the first half of its work and will now enter the final five weeks of the session. The NH Association of Counties started the session tracking 320 LSR's with 111 priority bills. Each of these bills has had a hearing and vote on the floor. A quick review of the priority bills shows that there are forty-six priority bills that have crossed to the other body for continued work. Many of these bills have been amended to make them better, but a few are still concerning.

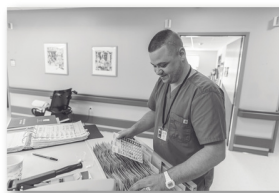
HB 1210 – relative to exemptions from vaccine mandates

- This bill includes conscientious objector language as an exemption to the federal vaccine mandate. This bill as amended will place federal funds at risk for the county nursing homes. While the tune has changed in the House since it passed this bill, the Senate will need to serve as the stop gap for vaccine bills that put federal funding at risk.

HB 1296 – relative to the forfeiture of items used in connection with a drug offense

- This bill as introduced did not impact county government but was amended at the Executive Session to place the burden of post-conviction litigation on the county attorneys' offices for the return of real property. This currently resides in the AG's office and the county attorneys believe that is where it should remain. The NHAC will take a more active position in the Senate.

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Crossover Legislative Update cont...

HB 1397 – relative to the length of terms for Rockingham County officers

- This bill would create a 4-year term for Rockingham's Register of Deeds, County Attorney, County Treasurer and County Sheriff. The Senate Election Law Committee has asked NHAC and NHMA to see if there is a way through warrant articles to get voter input into the process of altering the length of terms for officers. The Committee has not acted on the bill waiting for NHMA and NHAC to complete their research.

HB 1455 – relative to State enforcement of federal vaccination mandates.

- This is Speaker Packard's bill and, similar to HB 1210, puts federal funds at risk by prohibiting the state from enforcing a vaccine mandate as a requirement of employment. The Speaker did say that the bill was filed prior to the ruling from the Supreme Court and as such he is open to an amendment.

HB 1540 – relative to recording custodial interrogations

- This bill has been altered dramatically since it was introduced. It now only requires an audio recording of an interrogation and allows financial costs as a reason to not record. However, the financial costs decision depends on a judge's discretion and may overrule a decision made by the county commissioners.

HB 1604 – including state medical facilities in the statute providing medical freedom in immunizations

- This bill has also been drastically amended. The conscientious objector language has been removed from the bill, leaving only the religious and medical objections. The nursing home administrators have reviewed the amended language and believe that they can make it work with their existing policies. There is a desire to tighten up the religious exemption language to follow the CMS requirements and language.

Crossover Legislative Update cont...

SB 227 – relative to death benefits for first responders who die from suicide

- This bill adds suicide to the killed in the line of duty benefit and adds in correctional officers. The House has companion language that also passed, so it is anticipated that the bill will head to the Governor's desk.

SB 294 – relative to the release of a defendant pending trial

- The Senate and the House both introduced bail reform bills. The Senate version seems to be the version that is further in the process as it is the more compact version and only targets certain offenses committed while out on bail.

In the last five weeks of the session, the Senate and the House will hold hearings and vote on bills. The final date for action on the floor is May 5th, with the remainder of May being focused on the committees of conference.



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Get Your County Broadband Ready!



You can make an impact while helping your county communities with "Broadband Readiness" by making the commitment today. NHAC and NCDE have partnered and continue to offer County Commissions and Administrators membership in the NH Broadband Investment and Planning Network. Met up and learn how to move projects forward by setting goals and objectives that invest and plan for the infrastructure of the future. NHAC's members who join the network must allocate a portion of their CSLFRF grant funds to NCDE of which 15% goes to support NHAC's capacity to provide value to your membership. If your county is interested in exploring membership and would like to talk to a representative of NCDE email Kate Horgan at khorgan@dupontgroup.com and Carol Miller at cmiller@digitalequity.us. An exploratory call will be scheduled at your convenience.

The Latest from the NACo Leadership Academy

The NACo Board of Directors approved a NACo member leadership program – the NACo Leadership Academy – an online, 12-week professional development initiative to equip frontline county government professionals with the most practical, fundamental leadership skills. NACo secured discounted rates and established scholarships to make this high-impact program financially accessible to all counties. This affordable, state-of-the-art program requires no travel and is designed for busy county professionals and emerging staff leaders. The next sessions begin April 25th, 2022, and we invite counties to identify nominees for enrollment now. **Learn more.**

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