

Senate Finance Committee

Deb Martone 271-4980

HB 1-A, making appropriations for the expenses of certain departments of the state for fiscal years ending June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, relative to state fees, funds, revenues, and expenditures.

Hearing Date: May 4, 2021

Time Opened: 1:00 p.m.

Time Closed: 10:20 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Daniels, Reagan, Giuda, Hennessey, Morse, D'Allesandro and Rosenwald

Bill Analysis: No analysis needed.

Sponsors:

Rep. Weyler

Rep. L. Ober

Rep. Edwards

Rep. Umberger

Who supports the bill: Please refer to Public Hearing Sign-In Sheets.

Who opposes the bill: Please refer to Public Hearing Sign-In Sheets.

Who is neutral on the bill: Please refer to Public Hearing Sign-In Sheets.

Summary of testimony presented:

Maria Camerlengo:

- Ms. Camerlengo is the Director of the nonprofit Silverthorne Adult Day Program in Salem.
- This program is important but unaffordable to many seniors.
- The current rate for Medicaid reimbursement is \$54.44 per day. The cost to run the program is over \$100 per day.
- Due to COVID, her 2020 losses amounted to over \$85,000.
- The VA has increased their rates to \$113 per day, covering two days per week for Silverthorne's veterans.
- They need more help to keep the doors open.
- Medicare does not cover adult day care.
- Many seniors fall between the cracks.
- The monthly rate to run the program is \$1,700.
- They are looking for more help so that they may help more families.

Lori Breen:

- Please support the developmental services budget, and those that carry out the work.
- Her 22 yr. old son, Jake, is supported by Gateway Services in Nashua.
- He wants to be independent, have his own place, and be a valued member of the community. He is willing to work and have meaningful employment.
- Jake participated in an internship program through St. Joseph Hospital, "Project Search", learning transferable job skills. He is now working at Five Guys Burgers and Fries.
- A fully funded developmental services budget secured Jake's participation in Project Search. He is learning necessary skills to thrive as an adult. Full funding offers a good quality of life for Jake, as well as the remainder of his family. This allows Lori to continue to work full-time and secure the health care benefits she needs for her family.
- Fully funding is a major factor in the success of the community as a whole.

Lisa Beaudoin, ABLE NH:

- Fully support the budget for the developmental disability community, and go beyond it.
- Include full funding for a Medicaid adult dental benefit, which is listed as a "priority need" in the State office of Medicaid.
- Support the In-Home Supports Waiver, the Choices for Independence Waiver and the acquired Brain Disorder Waiver.
- Now is the time to reverse "penny-wise and pound-foolish" health care policies which significantly contribute to people with disabilities experiencing the poorest health outcomes of any identified population in America.
- If NH is interested in raising rates of employment as well as improving health outcomes and lowering health care costs for people with disabilities, we must finally provide the funds for fiscally sound and comprehensive oral health care in NH.
- RSA 171-A mandates the New Hampshire Legislature fully fund the adult developmental disability service system. People with disabilities must have the support they are entitled to in order to participate in the American dream.

Katherine Goodwin:

- Katherine is a Program Director at the Kimi Nichols Center in Plaistow.
- They support over 64 developmentally disabled adults both residential and day care.
- If these programs were not fully funded, it would be a great disadvantage to the people they are serving.
- Dental hygiene is not necessarily a top priority.
- The Kimi Nichols Center cares for the whole person.
- Southern New Hampshire area agencies continue to close their doors.
- The cost of caring for a person who truly cannot care for themselves is skyrocketing. Without these supports more people will end up in nursing home facilities, hospitals and in medical crises.

Forrest Beaudoin-Friede:

- Fully fund the developmental services budget, as well as a Medicaid adult dental benefit.
- Forrest receives supports and services through the DD Waiver. He is a Medicaid recipient as well.
- It is extremely important these priorities are funded.
- With these supports, Forrest lives independently in his own apartment. He works part-time.
- Oral health is an important part of overall health.

Gail Brown:

- Gail is the Director of the NH Oral Health Coalition.
- Include funding for a Medicaid adult dental benefit in support of responsible management of scarce resources. This request supports the opportunity for integrated health delivery of medical and dental care by funding the inclusion of oral health and dental services for adults into a Medicaid managed care program.
- This is the opportunity for New Hampshire to fund that benefit allowing for integrated cost-effective medical/dental care that supports: (a) dental treatment in the right setting at the right time; (b) readiness for employment and education of Medicaid expansion enrollees; and (c) the opportunity for successful substance abuse treatment and extended recovery.
- Over 100 medical conditions are associated with dental diseases and conditions that can result in increased chronic care costs, avoidable hospitalizations, and emergency room visits that provide antibiotics and pain relief but no dental repair, at a very high cost drawn from scarce Medicaid funds.

Amy Moore:

- Ms. Moore is the Director of Ascentria In-Home Care, which provides personal care services for over 400 people through CFI.
- Thousands of Granite Staters depend on the CFI program. These are medically vulnerable individuals ages 18 to 100 who qualify for nursing homes, but who choose to remain in their own homes. Home and community-based care costs a fraction of what a nursing home does.
- These programs have been underfunded for over a decade--so badly that New Hampshire ranks 50th in the amount of Medicaid funding it spends on home and community-based care.
- CFI is failing our most vulnerable citizens. Rates are so low that providers cannot hire the workers they need to care for these individuals. You can go to work at Market Basket, McDonalds or Walmart and receive a much higher wage than currently working for a CFI program.
- We hail these caregivers and health care workers as heroes during this pandemic, but we won't pay them a livable wage.
- Based on DHHS data, the entire CFI appropriation is rarely spent. This is not because the budget is too large; it's because agencies can't provide the services.

Funds are being left on the table that could enhance rates and eliminate gaps in care.

- "We're not asking you to put more money into the budget. We're asking you to direct the Department of Health and Human Services to put the money that is there into rate increases."
- We must strengthen our home and community-based care system NOW.

Matthew Houde:

- Matt is VP-Government Relations for Dartmouth-Hitchcock.
- The pandemic has highlighted gaps in our system that are designed to provide for people in their time of need.
- We need to rebuild a robust continuum of behavioral health care, supported by ancillary community services, that will help avoid institutional care by providing prevention and early intervention, integrate behavioral health with physical health, and ensure adequate crisis care is available and accessible when necessary--as well as transitions for patients after institutional care so as to avoid further hospitalization.
- Both the Governor and the House budgets recognized the 3.1 percent Medicaid provider rate increase authorized in the prior budget as well as the Medicaid Enhancement Tax and the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital Agreement reached by the State of New Hampshire and providers several years ago. Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health requests the Senate Finance Committee maintain those provisions in HB 1-A.
- The line item for indirect and direct graduate medical education in the DHHS budget has been suspended for at least a decade. As the state's only academic medical center, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health is ever hopeful that New Hampshire will resume support for the work of training the medical workforce of the future.
- As a contractor with the state, Dartmouth-Hitchcock is concerned that their efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion could be undermined by the limitations imposed by the divisive concepts policy. This policy provision should be removed from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- DHHS entered into a contract with UniteUs to implement a closed loop referral system. This referral system will enable social service organizations to coordinate services, which in turn will allow for the efficient use of limited resources. The policy provision in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL pertaining to the closed loop referral system should be removed.

Jeff Dickinson:

- Jeff is the Advocacy Director for Granite State Independent Living.
- CFI services Jeff utilizes are personal care services at his home in Franklin. He is 50 yrs. old and has a form of Muscular Dystrophy. He uses a power wheelchair, and at times a ventilator. He needs full help with all activities of daily living, such as showering, dressing and eating. These services allow Jeff to remain at home in his community.
- Please continue to make CFI a priority.

Arthur Gardiner:

- Fully fund the initiatives in the 10-Year Mental Health Plan adopted in January 2019. Folks in the Upper Valley in Hanover are particularly concerned that adequate funding be provided to permit the initiation and successful operation of a mobile crisis support facility in this part of the state. Legislative support is needed to ensure an adequate budget for that greatly needed treatment facility.
- Mr. Gardiner has a family member who is burdened with mental illness. He has direct experience with the serious consequences of the emergency room boarding crisis.
- The long wait in a very busy emergency room, unable to cope in a humane way with a serious attack of fear and paranoia, has contributed in a major way to delusional memories of trauma. With every good motivation, a system designed to protect and cure has a harmful rather than helpful effect. The emergency room boarding crisis has to be addressed and eliminated.
- The emergency boarding problem is the result of a much broader issue--an overburdened mental health care system stretched beyond its limit. There are not enough first contact crisis support facilities to provide needed treatment and to separate more serious from less serious mental problems. People sufficiently ill to visit an emergency room face the waiting time that so prominently evidences the system's lack of sufficient capacity. Those who finally reach a Designated Receiving Facility receive treatment from a caring and competent, but frantically busy staff. Many beds there are used by patients who could successfully be treated in transition facilities offering less intensive support but there are not enough available. And the entire care structure suffers from a wage structure that is really inadequate for its needs.
- We need to be aware that the spectrum of mental illness includes a large cohort of people just as impaired by illness as those suffering from melanoma or arteriosclerosis. An adequate health care system must be available to treat such illness every time and on time.
- Regarding "divisive concepts," our history is what it is--both its tremendous achievements and its difficulties. We must realistically fashion our future from our history--viewed from all perspectives.

Leslie Want:

- Leslie is the Vice-Chair of the Manchester Board of School Committee.
- HB 1-A and HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL do not meet the needs of Manchester students and taxpayers. While cutting corporate taxes it underfunds public schools in New Hampshire. Its contribution to public schools is last in the nation. We can do better than that.
- Manchester stands to lose \$5.2 million in adequacy aid, due to low enrollment and fewer free and reduced-lunch applications.
- The New Hampshire Retirement System increase leaves Manchester with a \$7.4 million shortfall, after receiving a tax cap increase from city aldermen, assuming they get that increase.

- Please fund education so our students can recover from their learning losses and go on to meet their fullest potential.
- Do not let the budget include HB 544. It would harm Manchester students, the largest and most diverse community in the state.
- Ms. Want urged the committee to pass HB 135 with Rep. Luneau's amendments.

David Chandler:

- Mr. Chandler volunteers at both the Community Kitchen and the Senior Center in Keene.
- Make funds available for disabled people deeply in need.

Owen Houghton:

- Increase adult care rates.
- Mr. Houghton's personal belief in the value of adult medical daycare comes from his past need for relief from caregiving. The Alzheimer's Disease diagnosis in 2010 of his wife, Norma, a 30-yr. RN at Monadnock Community Hospital, required his full-time attention for over six years. During those difficult years the Monadnock Family Services Adult Care Center Program came to his rescue, and provided quality medical, emotional and social care for both him and his wife. After she died, Mr. Houghton learned of the financial costs of her care at the Adult Care Center. Mr. Houghton wondered how they could have provided such support with a full staff and services on a daily reimbursement fixed rate of \$54.44.
- The inequity with nursing home rates nearly four times the current adult daycare rate is clear.
- An increase to \$75 per day is needed to keep our Adult Care Center open.

Kristine Stoddard:

- Kristine is the Director of Public Policy at Bi-State Primary Care Association.
- Bi-State represents 14 New Hampshire community health centers, which are located in areas of the state with limited access to health care services. New Hampshire's community health centers are nonprofit organizations that provide integrated substance use disorder treatment, behavioral health, primary care, and oral health services to nearly 120,000 patients, including approximately 20 percent of Medicaid expansion enrollees.
- In 2019 the Legislature and the Governor overwhelmingly supported a non-lapsing \$6.5 million appropriation to the State Loan Repayment Program because of the health care workforce shortage. This program provides partial payment towards educational loans of health care professionals in exchange for a commitment of three years to serve in a medically underserved area. The program is an invaluable recruitment tool for community health centers, community mental health centers, critical access hospitals, and other community-based health care providers.

- There should be approximately \$5.1 million of this 2019 appropriation still available. The Senate should ensure the funding be made available to expand access to this program as intended.
- The family planning program should have \$1.2 million appropriated so there is no gap in service due to impending federal changes. Please provide General Funds so that no gap occurs.
- Section 34 of HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, Reproductive Health Facilities, should be removed. It would require the physical separation of health care services, making the provision of these services by New Hampshire's family planning providers impossible.
- The "divisive concepts" language should be removed from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL. Health care providers are required to provide culturally competent care.

Jennifer Smith, MD:

- Dr. Smith is a retired family physician who worked at community health centers for many years.
- Oral health has been neglected. It is very important.
- Strip out language that would prevent Planned Parenthood from being able to access state funds for their important reproductive health work because a small amount of their work includes pregnancy terminations, a necessary service.
- Divisive language is inappropriate for the state budget. We shouldn't want to stop good discussion of what our history is with respect to minorities. It is impacting public health currently.
- There is a much higher rate of maternal death from people of color. We need to discuss how we remedy problems from the past. That includes why they happened in the past.
- DHHS is the most important part of our budget in many, many ways, in terms of protecting people's health and wellness. In light of the recent pandemic, "back of the budget" cuts should never have been suggested.

Marianne Jackson, MD:

- Dr. Jackson is the Executive Director of the Gibson Center for Senior Services.
- They have a very vibrant senior center, and are asking support of the \$1.5 million appropriation in the budget for senior centers.
- They provide nutritious meals, transportation to necessary activities of normal living, and resources for older adults in the community.
- They are a family, a social, caring web of people who need and serve each other.
- Senior centers have stayed connected to their patrons even if the doors were locked due to COVID. It has been grueling.
- They have sponsored vaccination clinics for RSVP and Meals on Wheels drivers, Meals on Wheels recipients and other elders.
- They have provided computer literacy training and free laptops to give people a chance to connect with email, Zoom and Telehealth. They made phone calls, wrote cards, created online programs and made every effort to leave no one behind.

- All of this takes effort and funds. Last year and this year, due to COVID, the Gibson Center for Senior Services was unable to hold its annual fundraising events, resulting in a 5 percent loss. Grant funding has been almost completely diverted to emergency efforts creating an additional 10 percent loss of expected revenue.

Audrey Gerkin:

- Ms. Gerkin is seeking support of the developmental services budget. Her family and daughter, Lexi, is one of the 15,000 families supported by the area agencies. She receives assistance through One Sky's Family Support Program as she moves towards transitioning to adult services.
- Lexi is almost 20 years old and attends the Monarch School of New England. She has worked at the Dover Children's Museum. For Lexi to continue seamlessly to be a part of the community as she turns 21, it is very important the budget be fully funded, and the waitlist continue to be nonexistent.
- Fully fund the Medicaid adult dental program. Lexi will benefit from this service, as well. She has many medical complications, and a trip to the dentist for even only a cleaning, typically, means anesthesia will be involved. By funding the Medicaid adult dental benefit it would ensure this basic care will be covered.
- Also, they rely heavily on Lexi's two full-time home nurses. They know how lucky they are to have that coverage. However, their three overnight shifts remain uncovered.
- Work to strengthen home and community-based services.

Alyssa Antman:

- Alyssa is a patient of the Equality Health Center.
- The language in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL defunds essential reproductive health care providers during a pandemic. Should it become law, thousands of Granite Staters, such as Alyssa, would be at risk of losing access to the critical lifesaving health care that they rely on.
- Alyssa shared with committee members her experience at the Equality Health Center with what turned out to be not such a routine change in her birth control. She was also given a cancer screening.
- She is forever grateful for the care she received at the health center.
- By requiring an unnecessary physical and financial separation, this budget is designed to force reproductive health care providers out of the program. Blocking funding for reproductive health providers could result in patients like Alyssa delaying or going without necessary care.
- Funding preventative services such as cancer screenings and birth control is good for the health of our communities and the overall economy.
- We should be working on expanding access to these services, not stripping them away.

Jennifer Bertrand:

- Please fully fund DD services and the Medicaid adult dental benefit.

- Her 21 yr. old daughter, Chloe, has been diagnosed with autism. She needs assistance with all activities of daily living. But with supports she has achieved monumental tasks such as attending high school, and was able to open her own shredding business during the pandemic.
- Raising Chloe has definitely presented some challenges. The family has had to navigate multiple systems.
- The support of the DD Waiver has helped their family stay together.
- As parents, Jennifer and her husband will continue to provide wraparound services for Chloe in her adult years, but they cannot do it alone. No one can.
- Hardworking families need the State of New Hampshire to do their part and fully fund DD services.

Heidi Marandos:

- Fully fund DD services and the Medicaid oral health care benefit.
- Heidi and her husband adopted two special needs children out of foster care. They receive supports from Pathways, the area agency. Their older son has a cognitive impairment and is medically complex. And he is loved by everyone in their community. He is transitioning to adult community supports, which will aid him in accessing employment and personal care. He will need a day program so that Heidi and her husband can continue to work.
- Their son also suffers from a congenital tooth enamel issue and needs comprehensive, ongoing dental work.
- Heidi worries that once her son reaches adulthood, shortages and supports for personal care needs and a lack of good oral health could lead to serious complications for the vibrant son who brings joy to everyone he meets.

Ken Barnes:

- Mr. Barnes supports the removal of school voucher language from the budget. It is a terrible idea. It discriminates against our public school children.
- Remove HB 544 from the budget; it doesn't belong there. It turns freedom of speech and thought on its head. It attempts to censor teaching in an effort to make our society more inclusive and fair.
- Fully fund DHHS. Restore the back-of-the-budget cuts and the vacant positions.
- Support the Medicaid adult dental benefit, DD services, home and community-based care and community health centers. Those supports are very necessary and important for those who must rely on those types of services, as well as address health care disparities.
- It will be very costly for the state to defend the large number of lawsuits that will, no doubt, be filed against the constitutionality of HB 544. Training to make our society better would be illegal under HB 544. Take that language out of the budget.

Christopher Becker:

- Mr. Becker is a public charter school employee.
- The language of HB 544 limits academic judgment through censorship.
- There is a shift in the ways Social Studies and English are being taught.

- The wording of the bill makes it seem like teachers are teaching to hate others; to regard those of particular races and genders as inferior.
- It is suggested that the way history is being taught paints a picture of males and white people as apparently sexist and racist, and therefore inferior.
- Students are able to separate their personal identities from the historical deeds that we study much more so than adults. High school students are uniquely suited to grapple with challenging and complex historical topics in nuanced ways. They actually don't need any interpretation or interjection from their teacher, since the primary sources speak for themselves. Students are able to perceive racism and sexism and where it exists in the historical record because they are intelligent and compassionate, not because their instructor instructs them to do so. They can recognize bias on their own.
- Western civilization has a long history of discriminatory practices and policies.

Maureen Meletis:

- Maureen is an advocate with the Alzheimer's Association MA/NH Chapter, which currently supports 26,000 people living with Alzheimer's in the Granite State.
- Support the Governor's budget request to include critical increases in three Medicaid services under the Choices for Independence Waiver: personal care, homemaker and case management.
- Invest in adult medical day services by adding \$4 million to the state budget.
- Restore the Governor's funding for senior centers to provide essential services.
- Over 57,000 individuals in New Hampshire are a caregiver to a loved one living with Alzheimer's, creating a total of 82 million hours of unpaid care for a total value of \$1.5 billion.
- Eighty percent of older adults with Alzheimer's/dementia receive help with a daily personal care activity such as bathing, dressing and grooming. Unfortunately, services that could help these families like the CFI program have been underfunded for years with the health care workforce continuing to decline, and putting more pressure on a loved one serving as the primary caregiver.
- COVID-19 has played a significant role in adding additional strain on family caregivers due to the reduction of outside support and resources.
- Please provide our families with the support they need to keep their loved ones at home.

Ann Sanok:

- Ann has a 26 yr. old son, Alex, who has been supported by One Sky. He presently lives in a group home which is qualified to provide intensive behavioral services. These supports are needed for individuals who may engage in extreme behaviors, such as prone to aggression or violence, breaking things, excessive rocking or noises. Some individuals may be non-verbal or physically impaired. Some have extreme OCD or anxiety. They typically cannot tolerate much stimulation and need one-on-one supervision. They are unable to drive,

many can't read or write, and most of the more challenged population will never work.

- Autism is a nightmare for many, the ones with the most profound disabilities. It's a life sentence for the child and the parent. It can be crippling physically, emotionally and financially.
- The number one issue of overwhelming concern to parents of autistic children is what happens when the parents die.
- Do not forget the forgotten. Support this budget and support the cause and lives of these citizens. They deserve the same liberties and freedoms but need a helping hand to live a life that is going to be very different, but which will be safe, meaningful and rich in its own way.
- New Hampshire can do better. Fully fund the developmental services budget, and learn more about this system and the unique, loving people you will help by doing so.

Devon Chaffee:

- Devon is the Executive Director of ACLU NH.
- The divisive concepts provision attempts to censor concepts that are used in diversity training to educate individuals on discrimination that people of color face.
- Diversity trainings are currently used by law enforcement, schools, state and local agencies and private employers. Most often they're used because these entities want to create workplaces and communities that are more equitable and inclusive.
- This language was taken directly from a federal Executive Order that was stayed by a federal judge and is now defunct. Identical language is now being pushed in a number of states across the country by D.C.-based think tanks.
- For schools, this provision is an attack on parents and communities to come together and address difficult topics.
- "Do you want this Legislature to start down the road of issuing state government mandates about what can and can't be discussed in our local schools? Is it the role of this Legislature to begin censoring local school districts? Or do you trust the local families and communities in your district to work with your local schools to best identify the way forward on difficult topics."
- This provision would bar the implementation of the recommendations made by the Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement, Accountability, Community and Transparency, often referred to as "LEACT". These recommendations include annual training on implicit bias and cultural responsiveness.
- Agencies see these trainings as important opportunities for public servants to learn how stereotypes impact behavior.
- Remove the divisive concepts provision from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Rep. Tony Caplan:

- This budget cuts childcare and K-12 education. It defunds health care by close to \$100 million. At the same time it provides tax giveaways to corporations and the wealthiest in our state.

- The definition of "divisive concepts" in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL is vague and general. It is guaranteed to increase divisions in our society.
- This is government weighing in on race and gender. These issues remain relevant today.
- The attempt to limit speech and conversation on these issues is unconstitutional, and infringes on free speech. It usurps local control on education. Most importantly, it interrupts the free flow of ideas that we depend on as free people. In a democracy it disrupts the "free marketplace of ideas". Remove this provision from the budget where it does not belong.
- Education freedom accounts would neither improve our education or increase our freedom. New Hampshire families for generations have relied on public schools to educate their children, and set us up for success as a society.
- Yes, there are problems with our public schools that we need to work on. But the answer is not taking money away from the public school system and sending it to private schools. This will inevitably increase local property taxes. This goes against our separation of church and state.
- New Hampshire's public school system is one of the finest in the country. Remove this provision from the budget, as well.

Lyn Schollett:

- Lyn is the Executive Director at the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence.
- Maintain the \$1.26 million appropriation that was part of the domestic violence prevention program. This would adequately fund the lifesaving services provided by their 12-member programs to address domestic violence and sexual assault across the state.
- In the last two years the New Hampshire Coalition has provided free and confidential services to nearly 30,000 victims, including providing shelter to over 1,000 adults and children in their 12 emergency domestic violence shelters.
- During this same timeframe, they were forced to turn away over 1600 adults and over 740 children seeking emergency shelter.
- The state has worked tirelessly to respond to the opioid crisis, the lack of mental health services, and to improve child protection. We need to respond earlier and more comprehensively to those who suffer from domestic and sexual violence.
- The essential role our crisis centers play in responding to trauma is becoming increasingly apparent during the pandemic. Imagine the terror when being forced to shelter at home with the person who is continually raping and assaulting you. In spite of the pandemic, our emergency crisis centers have received well over 100,000 calls in the last year.
- They were forced to shelter victims in hotels during the pandemic, not an optimal place. They've worked with the courts to change the process for seeking a protective order. They've hosted support groups on Zoom. Advocates can now reach victims through text and chat.
- The long term effects of trauma manifest in many ways, including chronic and physical and mental health issues, depression, suicide, substance abuse disorders, and difficulty maintaining employment.

Cathy Spinney:

- Cathy is the parent of an almost 40 yr. old daughter, Kelly, who has significant developmental disabilities.
- Please support and add to the DD budget.
- Kelley needs help with almost everything, including all of her personal care. She uses a wheelchair and cannot speak. Cathy, 63 yrs. old, is still an active participant in her daughter's caregiving team. But it is getting physically harder for Cathy to do so. Imagine picking up your 40 yr. old daughter and carrying them around.
- We have a shortage of staff wanting to do this type of work. It doesn't pay well. Most do not receive health insurance. And it is too expensive to afford out-of-pocket.
- We need to offer these direct support individuals a wage that is competitive with McDonalds, and provide them decent health care insurance.
- Get rid of the divisive concepts language.

Lindsey Collins:

- Lindsey opposes the divisive concepts in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- The state has no business restricting important conversations about race, gender or antisemitism. These conversations are essential to building a multiracial democracy.
- Lindsey is a proud Jewish mother to a kindergartner, and was disgusted by Rep. Dawn Johnson, a Laconia School Board member, who on multiple occasions promoted antisemitism and white supremacy on her own social media with no repercussions.
- How is it going to benefit our children if we allow racism, white supremacy and hate to be upheld in our schools?
- Marginalized children need our support the most.

Carolyn Virtue:

- Carolyn owns and operates Granite Case Management. She provides elderly and adult services.
- She thanked those who worked on bringing the case management rate into compliance with federal law in this budget.
- Any other CFI services that do not have parity should be looked at.
- We have tremendous shortages in many of our services.
- PCSP is reimbursed at a higher rate.
- We need to address the access to care issues that are occurring in the CFI Waiver.

Kyle Worth:

- Kyle is the Executive Director at Nashua Adult Day Health.
- He strongly urges the increase of adult medical day reimbursement to \$75.
- Approximately 800 seniors attend adult daycare centers in this state. They have Alzheimer's, dementia, or need complete assistance with toileting or eating; strictly nursing home-level care.

- Even at that increased rate it is the best bang for your buck in terms of senior services. No other services can compare to that price. We are one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in the nation for adult day reimbursement.
- Many adult day programs have, and many will go out of business and no longer serve patients if there is not a raise increase. Hundreds of patients would be in need of nursing home-level care. That would roughly cost four times what adult daycare services cost.
- It's a great program that keeps people living in their communities rather than in institutions.
- The majority of Kyle's business is Medicaid.

Marianne Baxter:

- Marianne is the Executive Director of Merrimack Valley Daycare and Blueberry Express.
- Please reinstate the funds from the childcare scholarship budget to their previous levels.
- Low income families cannot afford childcare.
- The scholarship programs enable families to become self sufficient, increase their wages, spend time in a work setting and increase their personal wealth to the point where they can get off all state assistance.
- Coming off the pandemic, this is just not the year to try and cut this budget.

David Doherty:

- David is opposed to SB 130's inclusion into the budget. It has not been afforded the same scrutiny that SB 193 in 2018 or HB 20 this session has received. It contains many problems that have not been addressed. Those bills included complex challenges, including constitutional, historical, educational, organizational, public, private and financial issues, that were identified as needing working. Experts testified about the intricacies of special education funding, transportation issues and many other issues that intersected with the plan of SB 193. A bipartisan majority of the committee ultimately decided the bill wasn't ready to be enacted as unresolved issues remained.
- All of those issues and more remain unresolved, and appear in SB 130.
- Such a complex bill should not be wrapped into HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, with all its potential for unintended consequences, until a deep dive can be done into the specifics, as was done in 2018 and fix it.

Mayor Jim Donchess, Nashua:

- Restore the lost school aid which is resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic impact on the school aid formula for all public schools across New Hampshire.
- School aid for all cities and towns is projected to be down because there are fewer free and reduced lunch students, and a lower census in public schools. These numbers are artificially low due to the pandemic.
- The federal government has made all lunches free to all students due to the pandemic. So there is no longer an incentive for free and reduced lunch families to complete the paperwork necessary to qualify and be certified. School districts

are working hard to get the families to complete the paperwork, but have been only partially successful.

- For this coming year, consider equalizing school aid for all districts to the levels they received in the current fiscal year, so that we do not suffer next year a big decline as the result of these pandemic impacts.
- A big reduction in school aid will result in a big increase in taxes. It will impact Nashua's tax rate by approximately four percent.

Linda Bundy:

- The divisive concepts in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL would not be taught in diversity or inclusive trainings. Nor would they be a part of school instruction.
- The systemic racism that has evolved during our country's 400-year history does need to be discussed. The conversations are difficult but essential.
- This provision would block the ability for businesses and schools to discuss, explore and to think critically about our past, our present, and our vision about how to move forward.
- By rejecting this provision, New Hampshire can set an example for the country.
- Please remove the divisive concepts provision.

Maggie Fogarty:

- Maggie is with the American Friends Service Committee, and the grassroots Coalition for a People's Budget. They include faith leaders, advocates for health care, housing, environmental sustainability, racial justice.
- These budget documents fall short of what New Hampshire people deserve.
- Dream bigger and demand better when it comes to our state budget.
- We've been told we have to accept scarcity as the norm, and to beg for crumbs.
- What people are pleading for should be guaranteed in a wealthy state in a wealthy country.
- Affordable housing for everyone. High quality education for everyone, no matter where you live. Good health care for everyone, including mental health care, addiction treatment, disability and developmental services. Clean water and air for everyone. Public transportation in rural communities. Caring for our elders and our little ones. Keeping young adults in our state. Making sure our state workers earn a dignified wage and benefits, and that none of them are making less than \$15 per hour. New beginnings for people coming out of incarceration and non-police alternatives when there are crises in our communities so that we don't send so many people to incarceration.
- We will do this by raising taxes on the wealthiest New Hampshire people and corporations
- Our budgets are moral documents. Show that we really care for all communities in New Hampshire with a budget that invests in all of us.

Bonnie Dunham:

- Bonnie is the mother of a wonderful 40 yr. old son who experiences complex mental disabilities.

- Shawn is determined and a hard worker. He works at Wendy's and leads a full and active life. However, that life is not guaranteed. His continued quality of life is dependent upon the services he receives through Gateways Community Services.
- Shawn needs full-time one-on-one support. He receives that support from a direct support provider. That provider is committed to Shawn and makes far less than she could make in the private sector. The low pay for these providers has resulted in a shortage of staff, with devastating consequences for families with disabilities.
- The need for adequate staff and funding will become even more critical.
- Families desperately need the services that area agencies provide. High quality and cost effective services that change lives.
- Please include funding for oral health care for adults with disabilities on Medicaid.
- Fully fund the developmental services budget.
- Don't include the language for other unnecessary legislation such as SB 130 and HB 544. Don't let these bills hold the budget hostage. Let them pass or fail on their own merits.

Asma Elhuni:

- Asma is the Movement Politics Director for Rights and Democracy. She supports the "People's Budget".
- The inclusion of the divisive language amendment bans state agencies, K-12 schools, public colleges and universities and state contractors from learning about and addressing systemic racism and sexism, which is critical to overcoming barriers to a healthy and equitable community.
- If we can't talk about it, we will never address the issues that plague all of our communities.
- The language has a foreseeable chilling effect on our most important state-funded institutions.
- Why do all statistics point to a rise in hate crimes? Why are COVID-19 victims disproportionately people of color?
- Recently, two currently serving state representatives have used harmful antisemitic rhetoric on their personal social media pages and have claimed they were unaware of the antisemitic history of these items. Another state representative was accused of being Islamophobic.
- Remove this language from the budget.

Carol Conforti-Adams:

- Reinstate the Governor's budget which called for funding essential programs and staffing for DHHS. The House cut the budget for individuals living with disabilities and older adults.
- State revenues are far exceeding projections. Why cut these critical services?
- Carol is a quadriplegic and paralyzed. She needs morning and evening personal care services. Once placed in her power wheelchair, she can live independently.

She works three part-time jobs, drives, pays state and federal taxes, and actively participates in her community.

- If there were no programs, Carol would have been placed in a nursing home.
- Increases do not provide living wages for workers providing daily home care services. These low wages have resulted in a 40 percent vacancy rate in home personal care workers, and a 60 percent turnover rate due to the competitive job market.

Steve Boczenowski:

- Steve's son, Jeffrey, took his own life eleven years ago. His life changed that day, and he is not the same person he was.
- Jeffrey was 21 yrs. old when he died; a 4th year college student. He struggled with mental illness. He had depression and substance abuse issues. He was a hard-working and responsible young man.
- Suicide is a rare event, but lots more people live with mental illness, and they struggle each and every day.
- If there were more robust treatment options, Jeffrey would be alive today.
- People with mental illness create a drag on our economy. People with untreated mental illness cost more money to treat their physical illnesses. And these people put a burden on law enforcement.
- Fully fund the 10-Year Mental Health Plan and look favorable upon mental health considerations in the budget.

Marcela DiBlasi:

- HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL contains far too many cuts at a time Granite Staters need more support from the government.
- As it currently stands, the budget will effectively be defunding abortion, guaranteed by Roe v. Wade.
- Remove all language of HB 544. It is a manipulative attack on the attempt to meaningfully educate about race and gender in our state. Fundamentally, the bill is rife with faulty logic. Learning about difference is not the same as teaching divisiveness.
- The provision is hugely influenced by Donald Trump's 1776 Commission, whose report was a response to George Floyd and the subsequent human rights protests.
- This bill isn't about free and open dialog. Please remove this harmful language from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Jackie Cowell:

- Jackie is with Early Learning New Hampshire.
- Employment related childcare allows families that qualify for their income to receive assistance affording the childcare they need to keep working.
- Approximately \$15.2 million would be removed over the biennium, specifically for that program.
- Demand has decreased for this program, so DHHS decreased the appropriation.

- This also supports those who are job searching to have childcare while they job search.
- These funds should be restored and level-funded. The current appropriation is far too low.
- This can really help families move ahead.

Shannon MacLeod:

- Ms. MacLeod testified on behalf of the Mayor of Manchester, Joyce Craig. She referenced the April 14, 2021 letter written by 13 city mayors of the state outlining the impacts New Hampshire's state budgets have had on municipal governments and local property taxpayers over the last decade.
- These budgets have resulted in significant losses of revenue to municipalities, contributing to property tax increases and delays in needed infrastructure improvements.
- There are always competing priorities, finite resources and a need to reinvest for growth in balancing a budget.
- In the last decade the state has failed to prioritize funding for local municipalities, resulting in heavy financial burden on local taxpayers, particularly retired Granite Staters on fixed incomes.
- One of the most significant losses in revenue to municipalities was the reduction in the Meals and Rooms Tax distribution. Since 2011, the local municipalities' share has been trending downward, while the overall revenue collected has increased by 60 percent. Manchester alone has lost out on over \$41 million over the last decade due to the failure of the state to live up to its commitment.
- Revenue sharing has been suspended since FY 2009, resulting in a loss of over \$300 million to municipalities and counties.
- From state pension costs to state aid grants, the State of New Hampshire continues to renege on its commitments to municipalities and local taxpayers.
- Cities and towns will continue to provide all the necessary services to residents.
- Please put an end to unsustainable downshifting.

Jim Doremus:

- Mr. Doremus is the CEO of the Concord Family YMCA, and the YMCA Alliance, comprising the nine YMCAs in New Hampshire.
- The "Y" is the largest provider of childcare and summer camps in the Granite State.
- The Alliance opposes the cut in the childcare scholarship program in HB 1. The program offers critical support for thousands of New Hampshire children. More than 2/3 of "Y" families benefit from this program.

Rev. John Gregory-Davis:

- Reverend Gregory-Davis represents the Meriden Congregational Church and the New Hampshire United Church of Christ Economic and Racial Justice Ministry Team.
- They support the "People's Budget".

- The major difference between HB 1-A, HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL and the "People's Budget" is their underlying morality.
- Budgets express the values of those proposing them.
- The proposed BPT and BET tax cuts will primarily benefit 76 large, multi-national corporations that do business in this state, while depleting state revenue and downshifting costs to municipal property taxes to fund essential infrastructure and public education. In doing so, it bails out the wealthiest and further adds to the struggles of Granite Staters.
- It is simply not true that we cannot do better.
- Remove the divisive concepts language from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Claudia Istel:

- Claudia is a retired public high school teacher, and adjunct to CCSNH.
- Funding for education is inadequate. The state is once again reneging on its responsibility to provide an adequate education.
- Placing school vouchers in the budget is forcing Granite Staters to accept vouchers and their financial burden on school districts without the usual scrutiny a standalone bill would receive. Public school districts will have to provide all the same services at the same level of quality and standards with less money. Public schools cannot afford money taken out of their limited budgets. Local property taxpayers cannot afford to pay more.
- The divisive concepts language has no place in the state budget. Education, knowledge and thoughtful discussion are the ways to make change for the better. The intent of the language is to promote more division and hardship to the most vulnerable members of our communities.
- Please read the demands of the "People's Budget". It is a moral document. It will raise up the wellbeing of all.
- The proposed budget takes more from those who have the least to give.

Marcia Hayward:

- Keep the school voucher bill out of the budget.
- There has been a lack of vetting of the educational service provider in SB 130. There are no guidelines, certifications or licensing provided for.
- The scholarship organization would work on a commission basis. This is a conflict of interest, as there is a built-in incentive to approve any request.

Christina Darling:

- Christina has two sons who both receive the childcare scholarship. The program has allowed her to find full-time employment and keep her apartment. Her children are safe and cared for while she is gone during the day.
- Christina has a sister who had to leave her job as a nursing assistant due to childcare difficulties.
- Which costs more, the childcare benefit or state welfare?

Judy Lundahl:

- Judy spoke on behalf of the Monadnock Interfaith Project ("MIP") in Keene.

- MIP opposes HB 544 that seeks to prohibit teaching about systemic racism and sexism in public schools and state-funded programs. The intent of the language contradicts MIP's mission for community understanding and mutual respect.
- Collectively, we need to face head on the present racism and sexism, existing virtually in every system in our lives--education, criminal justice, housing, economy and religion.
- Instead of limiting discussion, let's commit to deep reflection, hard conversations, and changing practices and policies in all of our institutions to move beyond racism and sexism.

Kim Memmesheimer:

- Support the Governor's budget request regarding critical increases to three Medicaid services under the Choices for Independence Waiver: personal care, homemaker and case management services.
- Increase the budget by \$4 million for adult day services.
- Restore the Governor's funding for senior centers.
- Kim is an attorney in the area of elder care. She works with clients who either desire for themselves or their loved ones to stay in their homes. Choices for Independence is critical to that goal. Allowing people with dementia to stay at home longer will save money for the state in the long run. Funding home health care and personal services is vital to protecting the state's budget.
- All of these budget items provide vital resources to the unsung heroes for our communities--the unpaid family caregiver. Twice as many caregivers of those with dementia indicate substantial financial, emotional, and physical difficulties compared with caregivers of people without dementia. Dementia caregivers also report lower quality of life than non-caregivers, and they are more likely than non-caregivers or other caregivers to report that their health is fair or poor.
- Unfortunately, services that could help these families, like the CFI program and adult daycare, have been underfunded for years. The decline of the health care workforce puts more pressure on family members to become the primary caregiver. Adult day services and senior centers have also been underfunded, which reduces families' ability to keep their loved ones at home. This can result in needing to utilize long-term care services earlier than a family would like to, which can be incredibly expensive at both the public and private levels.
- In addition to the failure to fund these vital programs, COVID-19 has added strain to the burden of family caregivers. Many senior centers are not able to provide in-person services and programs due to limited staff and volunteers. Isolation over the past 14 months has hit those living with Alzheimer's and other dementia especially hard, and it has also been an incredible strain on family caregivers who have lost access to outside supports and other resources during this time.
- Please provide our families the supports they need to keep their loved ones at home.

Jeff McLynch:

- Jeff is Project Director of the NH School Funding Fairness Project.

- While the focus of the proposed budget is the provision of public services in each of the next two years, it is important to acknowledge at the outset that, when it comes to school funding, two fundamental injustices have been allowed to persist in New Hampshire for at least several decades. Despite a clear constitutional mandate, far too many of our children continue to face deep and enduring inequities in the educational opportunities available to them, diminishing not only their futures, but that of the Granite State as a whole. At the same time, enormous disparities in the property taxes paid by residents and businesses in different communities pose oftentimes barriers to economic security and development.
- Unless the committee acts to improve HB 1-A and HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, the challenges before this state's public schools--and the students, families and communities they serve--will be even more severe in the coming biennium. More specifically, according to data from the Office of the Legislative Budget Assistant and the Department of Education, due to the pandemic and the termination of additional aid and fiscal capacity disparity aid, state education aid is expected to fall, in total, by roughly \$90 million between FY 2021 and FY 2022.
- The versions of HB 1-A and HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL before the committee today failed not only to begin to rectify the school funding injustices that have plagued for so long, but also to respond appropriately to the difficulties created by the pandemic and by expiring law. While HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL in its current form does contain provisions intended to mitigate the effect on school finances of temporarily lower numbers of students completing the paperwork for free and reduced price meals, it only does part of the job, closing just \$17 million of the expected \$90 million gap in FY 2022.
- Although HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL identifies an additional \$100 million for use by the Education Trust Fund in FY 2023, it devotes those funds to a reduction in the statewide education property tax ("SWEPT"), rather than targeting greater assistance to those communities most in need.
- The committee is urged to strengthen the proposed budget significantly before it is considered by the full Senate. In particular, remove the proposed \$100 million reduction in the SWEPT.
- New Hampshire has long fallen hundreds of millions of dollars short, on an annual basis, of meeting its obligations to provide an adequate education to every child in the state. Solving the problem at hand is urgent and necessary, but the time to recast the system as a whole, so that all Granite State families are treated more equitably, is well past due.
- The NH School Funding Fairness Project stands ready to work with all Senators to build a more just school funding and property tax system in the year ahead.

Peter Miller:

- School vouchers, education savings accounts, divisive concepts are all included in the budget. Mr. Miller opposes same.
- This budget is inadequate for school funding.

- SB 130 is a major policy issue, establishing the most expansive school voucher program in the United States. It should be debated and considered on its own merits, not hidden in the state budget. In 2018 the Legislature decided not to implement a much smaller school voucher program after concluding many issues remained unresolved. The same issues remain unresolved in the much bigger SB 130.
- Public funds diverted from our public schools will be used for school vouchers. Public schools are highly accountable for meeting students needs. Will voucher schools be as responsible?
- School vouchers have been used inappropriately throughout the country.
- Hiding major policy inside the budget, shielding it from debate, is a bad way to adopt major policy changes.

Rep. David Luneau:

- The impact of the \$100 million appropriation to the Education Trust Fund is felt most significantly in towns that have the lowest property tax rates in the state, and the highest property wealth. This just doesn't make any sense.
- A far better use of this appropriation would be to extend the equitable grants to school districts that were funded in the FY 2021 budget, and are offered by HB 623 and the amendments to SB 135. These grants have significant impacts for students and taxpayers in towns with the highest property tax rates, lowest property values and higher incidences of poverty. They provide meaningful school funding and property tax relief to cities like Manchester, and towns like Charlestown, Haverhill, Claremont, Pittsfield, and so many others.
- HB 623 has a fiscal note and a town-by-town analysis prepared by the LBA, making it easy to see how these equitable grants benefit our communities, students, taxpayers, and the state as a whole.

Ken Norton, NAMI New Hampshire:

- During Governor Sununu's budget address in February, he once again stated New Hampshire is in a mental health crisis. Fully fund mental health services as proposed in the Governor's budget.
- It's important we prioritize mental health funding to address the mental health crisis and the anticipated long-term impact of the pandemic it will have on mental health. That is evidenced by the significant increase in stress, anxiety and depression we are seeing across all ages. In particular, it is impacting children and young adults.
- During the last several months we have exceeded previous highs of the numbers of people being boarded in emergency departments, with 51 children being boarded on February 14, 2021, and a combined high of 89 children and adults being boarded during several days. Many of these people were experiencing suicidal intensity.
- Suicide continues to be a significant public health issue in our state. It is the second leading cause of death in New Hampshire for those ages 10-34.

- While Emergency Department Boarding is the tip of the iceberg relative to timely access to mental health care, there are long waits for outpatient treatment.
- We need to continue the work done in the 2019 Legislative session in fully funding the 10-Year Mental Health Plan by building out community-based services for mental health crisis response, step-up and step-down services, inpatient and outpatient capacity, supported housing, peer support, suicide prevention and substance use disorder services.
- NAMI NH supports moving ahead with building a new forensic hospital in order to end the practice of people with mental health conditions who have not been charged with crimes being transferred to the Department of Corrections and the Secure Psychiatric Unit. It opposes the back of the budget cut to DHHS currently contained in the House budget.
- As a member of the Governor's Law Enforcement Accountability, Community and Transparency Commission ("LEACT"), Mr. Norton urges strong support for fully funding Police Standards and Training as included in the Governor's Budget.
- Mr. Norton, as a member of the LEACT Commission, personally opposes the divisive concepts language currently included in the House budget. It would undermine much of the work done by the commission to address implicit bias and related recommendations for law enforcement, as well as the courts.

Rep. Mel Myler:

- Rep. Myler is the ranking member of the House Education Committee.
- That committee reviewed HB 20, which is almost identical to SB 130. Ultimately, they decided it was not ready to be considered by the House. They voted 20-0 to retain HB 20, based on the inadequacies of the language in the bill.
- Remove SB 130 from the budget. There is much opposition to it.

William Maddocks:

- HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL is woefully inadequate to meet the health, educational and other human needs of Granite Staters.
- HB 544 attacks widespread efforts to diversify the state. Enforcing this law will be a daunting task.
- There are hundreds of New Hampshire corporations carrying out inclusion work.
- "Drop a dime on diversity"--the new ad campaign?
- Mr. Maddocks gave examples of books which could be read for their "instruction" on divisive concepts.
- This is a crazy piece of legislation. It is unenforceable and offensive.
- Embrace the courageous conversations on diversity.

Kayla Montgomery:

- Ms. Montgomery is VP of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood New Hampshire Action Fund and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

- They strongly oppose the language of Section 34 of HB 2, requiring the physical and financial separation of services.
- There are currently 10 providers in the New Hampshire family planning program. With the requirement of a physical separation, the entire program would be dismantled.
- New Hampshire's family planning program provides funding for STD tests and treatment, birth control and cancer screenings, and breast exams and PAP tests. It does not and cannot fund abortion care. For patients to access abortion care, they must pay out-of-pocket or private insurance. It has never covered abortions.
- The dismantling of the program would affect statewide access to free or low cost services. These services are offered on a sliding scale based on income.
- This program provides care for the uninsured and low income, and provides coverage in rural areas.
- Please keep the New Hampshire family planning program whole.

Virginia Nossiff:

- Ginny is opposed to cuts in mental health services in HB 1-A.
- Implement a mental health system that works for all of our citizens, especially those in the North Country.
- In 2018 her son, a sophomore engineering student at UNH, came home one weekend and began to hallucinate, the beginning episodes of psychosis. It is a severe mental health condition. He was confused, frightened, and said things that made no sense. Having no other options they brought him to Memorial Hospital in North Conway, where he laid in a windowless room, on a mattress on the floor for 2.5 weeks, with no psychiatric care provided. There was no room at New Hampshire Hospital. Everyone told them it was someone else's responsibility, and that the system was broken. How had mental health care come to this in our state?
- Had there been a mobile crisis unit that could have traveled to their home, or had there been a facility that could provide the proper treatment, or had there even been staff that was trained in psychiatric care.
- For all those affected by mental illness and their families, oppose the cuts made to mental health services in HB 1-A.

Linda Mattlage:

- Linda strong opposes the inclusion of SB 130 in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL. This bill has many problems.
- Now, in the middle of a pandemic, is not the time to take on the major change of vouchers, also known as Education Freedom Accounts. School districts are already grappling with losing students due to the pandemic, demographic changes, and the doubling of charter school seats that we'll see shortly due to the federal grant Gov. Sununu accepted. This grant requires the state to double the number of charter school seats in the state by expanding some existing charter schools and adding some new ones. It is estimated that doing this will cost the state between \$57 million and \$104 million in the first ten years.

- If people are concerned about kids not getting what they need in public school, aren't charter schools created for just that reason?
- We should see how the expansion of charter schools works before spending additional state funds for a whole new parallel structure and funding system.
- Remove SB 130 language from the budget.

Jim O'Connell:

- Mr. O'Connell is a Manchester School Board member.
- The state's budget reduces educational funding by \$90 million. It is hard to understand and justify.
- Manchester is looking at a \$7.4 million dollar shortfall. Of the \$90 million being saved by the state, close to ten percent is coming out of Manchester.
- Manchester already spends less than practically every other school district in the state in terms of per student expenditures.
- The budget will have a very serious effect. It is not addressing some key issues.
- The Commission on School Funding spent almost one year looking at adequacy and how the state spends its money on education.
- Ten percent of the education budget will be spent on administration.
- The divisive concepts provision would become an embarrassment to the state should it become law. It would have a detrimental effect on the way we are viewed by other states.
- Take a second look at the funding for education in this bill.

Deborah Opramolla:

- As a disability organizer and advocate, Deborah opposes the language of HB 544. It is unacceptable. Disability justice requires everyone to realize having a disability is a normal part of life. What is not is being embarrassed or ashamed of family members that experience a disability. What is not normal is to become silent.
- The People's Budget demands investment in services such as fully funding the waitlist and dental care for those who experience a disability. This must be an investment that not only takes individuals off the waitlist and provides dental care, but allows them all the services an individual needs to partake in the community.
- Silencing our ability to have discussions on our culture, history, and training of our workforce sends the message we are not welcome in this state.
- Daily there are between 25 and 30 children waiting in emergency rooms in urgent need of mental health care.
- The State House budget closes the Sununu Youth Services Center, but where will these children go?
- Appropriations to solve the mental health crisis in our hospital emergency rooms must be developed. Fully fund DHHS, as it provides vital services to the disabled community. It is the moral and legal obligation of the state to continue to provide these services.

Charyl Reardon:

- Charyl is President of the White Mountains Attractions Association.

- Add back into the budget the funding the House eliminated in the Division of Travel and Tourism Development budget. These dollars are not only an investment in our future tourism economy, but supplement the state's overall revenue which helps fund some of the additional and important needs of our citizens.
- Tourism is the second largest industry and economic driver in the state of New Hampshire. Every dollar spent on marketing on our great state has a significant return,
- Governor Sununu's budget seeks to fund the Travel and Tourism Division by \$9.5 million approximately, each fiscal year. This is just shy of the 3.15 percent net income earned from the Meals and Rooms tax.
- Tourists to New Hampshire leave behind an economic impact that drives billions of dollars to the bottom line.
- Tourism supports essential services such as public safety, education, parks, roads and infrastructure. Without tourism, each household in New Hampshire would have to pay additional taxes every year to make up the difference that comes from visitor spending.
- According to independent researcher SMARInsights, in 2019 over 600,000 trips to New Hampshire were influenced by Travel and Tourism advertising campaigns, contributing \$371 million in travel spending, and collecting \$33 million in Rooms and Meals taxes from visitor spending--about 10 percent of the state's General Fund. Not only does the promotion drive traffic to this state, we have seen it achieve a return on investment of \$13 for every \$1 spent.
- We understand the need to adjust the budget to address the shortfalls caused by the pandemic. But consider the proven track record that additional spending has had on our businesses and taxes. Investing in tourism marketing yields positive results, and is not only critical to growth, but also to recapture and maintain our market share. The investment of \$9.5 million in tourism promotion for each of the next two years could shorten the tourism industry's timeline for recovery by 2-3 years.

Paul Reuland:

- Mr. Reuland is the Board Chair of Media Power Youth.
- Please reinstate the \$50,000 Department of Justice grant to Media Power Youth that has been removed from the proposed budget. Without the grant funds, our organization will struggle to continue to employ a full-time program manager, and be unable to service many youth organizations as it has in previous years.
- They intend to launch a new program this fall with the grant funds. It would teach social and emotional learning skills necessary for the healthy youth and social media. This particular program is preventative in nature, and designed to address issues in children of school age before they arise.
- Mr. Reuland has both a son and a daughter. His desire is to equip his children with the tools they need to handle the emotional challenges they will face as they grow.
- Changes in the technological landscape have been so vast and distinct, that it inhibits his ability to help his children.

- The social media they consume impacts the way in which they see themselves, the world, and their peers.
- It's critically important that programs like these continue to receive the support of state government.

Angela Pape:

- Angela had close friends experience racism. She shared a number of her friends' experiences with committee members.
- Having friends that were multi-cultured made Angela think she was not racist. Her own biases were very revealing to her.
- Racism exists consciously and unconsciously, and in all of our systems. We need to grapple with it and make real changes.
- HB 544 shuts down conversation. If we don't talk about a problem, how can we begin to solve it?
- It is uncomfortable for those of color to endure racism day in and day out.
- American ideals are for equality and opportunity. We must stand up for all of us.

Laura Pelletier:

- Interlakes Daycare Center in Meredith is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.
- They stayed open last year during the pandemic for families of essential workers.
- Forty percent of the children they care for are from low income families, to qualify for the state childcare scholarship.
- The need for families to access affordable childcare may be greater than it was pre-pandemic.
- The scholarship program helps families get ahead. They grow in their jobs and contribute to the economy.
- Please support this worthwhile program, which enable parents to get ahead.

Susan Richman:

- Susan has been a public school teacher for over 30 years.
- There is no accountability for home school instruction.
- Some students who receive an educational voucher will require special services--reading, speech, help with autism--not provided by their private school or in-home schooling. They are entitled to attend their local public school up to 50 percent of the school day, to receive those special services and more. But the \$4,000-\$8,000 of adequacy and differentiated funds allocated for that child's educational voucher would remain with the private school or the home schooling. That money could have paid for a paraeducator to work with a group of special needs students.
- Money equals the ability to offer services to students. That voucher student is removing money from the public school, while receiving services. After nine years, that child's public school will have lost approximately \$50,000 in adequacy and differentiated aid.

- Services are finite; they cost money.
- SB 130 needs more consideration to enable learning what happens when these educational dollars are taken from our public schools.

Susan Stearns:

- Please fully fund mental health services originally included in Governor Sununu's budget and ensure the budget you pass fully funds critically needed mental health services accessible to all Granite Staters.
- Yesterday there were 43 adults and 7 children experiencing a mental health crisis waiting in emergency departments for an inpatient psychiatric bed. We all know this emergency department boarding crisis has been going on, unabated, for over 8 years in our state.
- Susan has an adult child who lives with a serious mental illness. Two years ago while traveling and going through a recent medication change, her son was in crisis, fearing he would hurt himself. He asked her if he should go to the emergency room. Susan did not know how to answer her son.
- Susan has been her son's advocate since he was first diagnosed with an emotional disorder at age five. She has been a mental health advocate for over 20 years. It is what she does. But faced with her son in crisis--over 500 miles away, Susan was terrified. She was afraid for his safety should he wind up boarding in the emergency department without an advocate at his side.
- Susan's son is 6'6", not violent at all, but highly sensitive and emotional. He had never had an inpatient psychiatric admission. She knew he would become despondent at being held for days with nothing to do, and likely very emotional. She thought he might prove frightening to the staff because of his size. She was afraid he could wind up injured by security or placed in the county jail.
- In one of the hardest decisions of her life, Susan told her son not to go to the emergency room. She was able to access family support for her son. He returned home the next day. They successfully managed his crisis with his doctor.
- We have not yet seen the impact of this pandemic on Granite Staters. Those numbers of folks waiting in emergency departments are just the tip of the iceberg.
- Increase funding for mental health services and ensure full funding for NH's 10-Year Mental Health Plan.

Louise Spencer:

- Louise is a co-founder of the Kent Street Coalition.
- Let the principles of the People's Budget guide the committee's work as you craft a budget that meets the needs of Granite Staters.
- On the House side of the budget process we saw a lack of transparency, and a process that failed to give the public real and substantial opportunities for meaningful input. The budget was dramatically amended after public testimony had concluded, with the public then not given any additional opportunity to comment on those changes.

- One day of public testimony hardly seems sufficient to speak to the myriad of needs and concerns that a fair and humane budget must address.
- The majority has taken the opportunity to advance social policies in formulating the budget.
- Remove SB 130 and HB 544 from the budget, and hold additional hearings for the public to comment, should you change the budget substantially.

Rep. Joshua Query:

- Representative Query is a Planned Parenthood patient. He knows how critical the services they provide are.
- Last year he was unknowingly exposed to the HIV virus. He was uninsured and unemployed. So many health care providers were closed due to the pandemic. But he knew he needed to see a doctor quickly. He received a telehealth appointment, with the first portion of the appointment via the phone. They let him share what happened in a way that made Rep. Query feel more comfortable. He was told he needed to go to the health center to receive an instant HIV test. He had indeed been exposed. They attempted to determine through blood work if he was HIV-positive. He immediately began post-exposure treatment, which slows the chance of contracting the disease. A 30-day supply of these pills cost over \$12,000, which Rep. Query did not have.
- Planned Parenthood worked with him and the drug manufacturer to ensure he qualified for the reduced cost. Rep. Query started the treatment at no cost to himself.
- The treatment lasted 90 days, which would have cost almost \$40,000.
- Rep. Query was tested monthly at Planned Parenthood. His third HIV test confirmed he was HIV-negative.
- Planned Parenthood saved Rep. Query's life. He continues to go to the health center every 90 days to maintain the HIV-negative status. For all these visits the health center charged him based on his income, instead of a flat rate.
- Rep. Query represents so many people in this state who lost insurance coverage or are under-insured. He represents people who face astronomical medical costs, who need to decide either the debt or the disease is the harder battle. He represents people who rely on community health centers or Planned Parenthood, who offer care based on a patient's circumstances for preventative health care.
- Remove the language about physical and financial separation requirements on reproductive health facilities to ensure trusted providers like Planned Parenthood can continue providing critical and lifesaving care to Granite Staters like himself.

Leah Quimby:

- Leah is another former patient of Planned Parenthood.
- Planned Parenthood has been there for Leah when she needed them for many stages of her life.
- There were times in her life when she had no health insurance and needed birth control. She received regular reproductive health care checks.

- All the health center workers were kind and helpful. Leah trusts Planned Parenthood to listen and support her.
- Blocking funding for Planned Parenthood and abortion providers could result in patients facing interruptions in necessary care.
- Make it more possible for people like Leah to receive the care and important cancer screenings they need.

Anthony Poore:

- Anthony believes issues of diversity, equity and inclusion are the defining issues of our time. If we are to achieve the hopes and aspirations that came before us, we must work collectively towards comprehensive, enduring, equitable solutions.
- There is undeniable evidence that diversity, equity and inclusion in business and government leads to heightened levels of innovation, customer service, citizen engagement, and long-term economic growth.
- When legislative leaders create environments where everyone is encouraged to bring their differences to work and school, organizations and governments thrive.
- If your goal is to achieve social and economic justice for all, then diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are some of the most powerful tools legislators can leverage to improve the upward mobility of historically marginalized populations.
- The divisive concepts amendment is an attempt to ban racial and gender equity efforts in government by silencing any conversation or effort that recognizes the existence of white supremacy or systemic racism. It refers to unifying racial justice and equity efforts as "divisive" and prohibits any training that would create anguish or guilt, with the intended effect of shutting down all conversation about race and gender in government, by government contractors, or in publicly funded schools and universities.
- As a parent of two multi-racial school age children, Anthony can personally appreciate the challenges children of color face when confronted with the consistent and pervasive bigotry of low expectations, and appreciate a community where all students have the chance to gift New Hampshire with their potential and fulfill their destiny.

Allan Reetz:

- Mr. Reetz represents the Hanover Co-op Food Stores and Auto Service Centers. They stand opposed to HB 544 and its inclusion in the state's budget. They are aligned with the 240 other businesses and entities that signed the anti-HB 544 letter sent by New Hampshire Businesses for Social Responsibility. Those businesses represent over 60,000 workers and are some of the largest employers in the state of New Hampshire. A look at the list of signatories will show a vibrant portion of the state's economy that this legislation will turn away.
- The unwieldy intent of HB 544 seeks to legislate against corporate free speech. Proposed restrictions extend to subcontractors and vendors, all because they do business with our state or were hired to help.

- The provision contains directives that, at first glance, seem benign, but onerous upon a second reading. It begs the question, "What successful legislation is this modeled on, and what problems does it seek to solve?" Supporters might state that its language seeks to unite, not to divide. Yet, how is that not evident to business leaders across the state?
- We live in a civil society where constructive debate is encouraged and necessary. The effort to legislate away the risk of hurt feelings or the assignment of blame will not work in business any better than it would in the New Hampshire House and Senate.
- Let us never silence the past or prevent discussion of our future. The wise voice of New Hampshire history still has much to teach us.

Steve Ahnen:

- Steve is President of the New Hampshire Hospital Association.
- New Hampshire's hospitals and the health care heroes who work in them are driven by a mission to provide high quality health care and improve the health and well-being of the communities they serve. That is true every day, and that resolve has certainly been demonstrated throughout the past year, however hospitals have been challenged as they have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The pandemic has challenged us all and, working together, we believe we can emerge from this crisis, but it will take great care and diligence to ensure that New Hampshire does so and that we are able to serve citizens across the state and help everyone return to what we all hope will be a much more normal, vibrant and healthy New Hampshire.
- It is absolutely essential that we have a robust and effective Medicaid program that helps to ensure recipients are getting the right care, at the right time, and in the right place. Resolution of the many challenges just a few years ago over the Medicaid Enhancement Tax and the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital payment program was an important step forward to creating stability in the Medicaid program for patients, providers and the State of New Hampshire.
- We are very appreciative that the Medicaid rate increases that were included in the last budget are maintained in the current budget before the Senate.
- There is no more urgent and pressing priority than addressing the behavioral health crisis facing New Hampshire. We appreciate the tremendous amount of work and effort that is being done in this area up-to-date, but it is imperative that this budget, as well as other legislative and regulatory efforts, collectively design a plan forward and articulate how it will be funded and carried out in the months and years ahead.
- The 10-Year Mental Health Plan was built as a blueprint for rebuilding a behavioral health system across the full continuum of care and services for those suffering a mental health issue. The ongoing crisis of patients waiting in hospital emergency departments until they can be transferred to New Hampshire Hospital or other appropriate settings for their care continues to be all too common. The waitlist is truly a symptom of a broader, systemic problem.

We simply do not have adequate resources across our entire system to care for those with a mental health issue.

- This is our time to resolve these issues once and for all, so that patients with a mental health issue can get the care they need and deserve, when and where they need it.
- We are very concerned about the addition of non-budgetary policy provisions that were added to HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL during the House phase of the budget, specifically that which seeks to incorporate HB 544 related to divisive concepts. Our hospitals and the dedicated caregivers who serve their patients every day strive to do so with the utmost care and respect for every patient. And they work to foster a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion within their organizations to attract and retain a workforce to deliver the highest quality of care to all of their patients. Inclusion of HB 544 will have a chilling effect on the important work that is occurring throughout the health care system to better serve all patients. We ask the Senate to remove this provision.

Ed Robbins:

- Mr. Robbins is opposed to the language of HB 544 that was incorporated into HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL. It is a tenuous connection that such legislation has to the state's budget. Including the language of HB 544 in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL is just a way to bypass a process in which support is not widespread.
- New Hampshire prides itself as the "Live Free or Die" state, the place where we believe that the individual is responsible enough to do right and not be burdened by state supervision, and yet here we are discussing just that.
- Others have testified regarding the potential and financial effects that may befall the state should the divisive concepts language be included. I'll appeal to that Yankee pragmatism and simply say that this legislation is a solution in search of a problem, and as such it should not be included in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Sarah Aiken:

- Sarah represents Community Bridges, one of ten area agencies that support those with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders and their families.
- Please support the developmental services budget.
- Sarah is the parent of a young man with a disability. Her son was served by the disability system for years. The services and skills he learned within the system were nothing short of miraculous. Diagnosed on the autism spectrum, in addition to having cancer and a rare genetic diagnosis, Sarah was unsure of her son's survival, never mind if he would work or go to school. Through Community Bridges he learned to walk, talk and be social.
- Sarah's son no longer needs services. He is no longer on Medicaid and he will never be on the waitlist. Not every child, however, has the same experience. Some need services throughout their lives.

- The services provided by the area agencies and their vendors allow for inclusion, skill building, access to the community, work, and all that encompasses a good life.
- We attribute the system's successes to the many thousands of wonderful people who work with the individuals that we serve, and the training they are able to provide staff.
- As a state contracted agency, it is for this reason that Community Bridges encourages the committee to review the divisive concept language, and how that language would change the availability of the trainings they provide.
- We've come a long way since the closure of the Laconia State School and Training Center.
- Fully fund the developmental services budget, reconsider the divisive concepts language, and increase wages for those who are front line workers, such as case managers and direct support personnel.

Karen Trudel:

- Fully fund the mental health budget as put forth in Governor Sununu's budget.
- Medicaid reimbursement needs to increase so we can retain staff.
- The mobile crisis units need to be fully funded and implemented, especially in the North Country. Karen has utilized the mobile crisis units a number of times, and has found it to be an extremely useful tool.
- Peer supports need additional funding, as well. Again, staffing is an issue.

Rep. Amanda Toll:

- This budget irresponsibly cuts the Business Enterprise Tax, the Business Profits Tax, the Rooms and Meals Tax, and the Interest and Dividends tax resulting in revenue decline for the state. Consequently, there will be massive cuts to social services and education. Costs will shift to towns, likely forcing them to increase property taxes, which will disproportionately harm folks on fixed incomes.
- The people of New Hampshire deserve a state budget that invests in the health, education, recovery, opportunity and vitality of our communities.
- Rep. Toll endorses the NH People's Budget, which was drafted by a coalition of social justice organizations. This should be the budget before you today. The People's Budget demands we invest in our recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, in real economic security, in our state workers, in adequately funding education, in our young adults, in people with disabilities and their families, in our children, parents, caregivers, elders, and in comprehensive health care including but not limited to mental health, reproductive health and dental health.
- To have the language of HB 544 in this budget is an abomination. The proposal is absurd. We must reckon with systemic injustices in order to move forward towards a compassionate and just future together.
- As one of the many citizens of New Hampshire who has utilized our reproductive health care centers, I also find it utterly shameful that this budget will be used to strip funding from necessary reproductive health care centers.

Patients visit Planned Parenthood for many reasons; primarily, it is to access affordable health care. Stripping funding from Planned Parenthood and other reproductive health care centers will impact low income folks the most, and will have negative impacts on health outcomes for the most vulnerable.

Joan Ascheim:

- Joan is testifying on behalf of the New Hampshire Public Health Association.
- Part III of SB 104 sought funding for a community health worker at each public health network in the state, but it was removed. The deployment of community health workers was a recommendation from the Governor's COVID-19 Equity Response Team as an effort to lift up some of our most vulnerable citizens during the pandemic and beyond.
- Please add \$1.2 million to the state budget to support a community health worker in each of the state's 13 public health networks. There is a large body of research now relative to community health worker effectiveness in improving health outcomes, reducing health care costs and bridging gaps in health disparities.
- SB 140 sought funding for several programs for families including community collaborations, family connections, home visiting and family resource centers to eliminate funding gaps for these programs. As families continue to recover from the economic and social effects of COVID and strive to balance the ongoing daily challenges of work, school and parenting, these programs are more important than ever.
- Please add \$1.37 million to the budget to fully fund these primary prevention programs for families.
- The language of HB 544 seeks to prevent New Hampshire state agencies, contractors, and schools from teaching concepts relative to diversity, equity and inclusion. At a time when our country is trying to confront the injustices of systemic racism, hate crimes, and health inequities that have been illuminated through the pandemic, this bill is dangerous and does not reflect the values of the people of this state. If we in public health cannot educate students, public health professionals and policy makers about such inequities, we only perpetuate them.
- Remove the language of HB 544 from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Rep. Joe Shapiro:

- Do not fold SB 130, education freedom accounts, into the state budget.
- Starting with a \$90 million shortfall from the last biennium and extending to COVID-related decreases in enrollment and resources, and the unpredictable effects of planned increases in charter school placements, the funding picture for our local school districts is very much in flux and very much in jeopardy.
- Now is not the time to add a new and largely unknown element into the mix.
- Education freedom accounts will further eat into our school budgets.
- Keene schools will lose more than one-half million dollars during the next five years.

- The full future damage to our public education system through unintended consequences is largely unknown.
- Education freedom accounts are like a time bomb. Once you put them in place and the fuse is lit, we will have little to no ability to limit the damage to our schools.
- Further erosion to public school funding will expand the disparity between wealthy and poor communities.
- In Keene, where the property tax rate is five times the rate of the wealthiest New Hampshire communities, taxes will likely increase. This will further the burden on homeowners and increase the obstacles to new economic development. Others will be forced to make drastic cuts.
- Leave education freedom accounts for another day.

Gina Balkus:

- Gina is CEO of the Granite State Home, Health and Hospice Association.
- Direct DHHS to increase home health provider rates for the Choices for Independence program to realistic levels.
- The current reimbursement rates fail to cover the cost of reasonable wages, travel time, mileage, supervision, training, background checks, benefits and other business costs. Because of this, home care agencies can't fully staff all the services that CFI enrollees need.
- People who are lucky enough to get care generally get about 65 percent of the home care services they are authorized to receive.
- It is close to impossible for new enrollees to receive any services at all.
- This means that vulnerable adults and elders who qualify for nursing home level of care are at risk of illness, injury and neglect in their own homes.
- Between 2017 and 2020 DHHS underspent the CFI home health services line between \$11 million and \$15 million each year. These funds could have been deployed to rate increases so that home health agencies could offer competitive wages or benefits. That is what DHHS did several years ago in the Title III-B and Title XX programs funded through the Older Americans Act. The Department should do the same for CFI, and bring the rates to parity with the Title programs and close to Medicare cost levels and close to private market rates.
- We believe there are sufficient funds in the line to significantly increase rates and reduce gaps in care.
- The Department's lapse should not be borne by vulnerable adults and elders.
- CFI enrollees are in a desperate situation. Many providers will no longer participate in the CFI program.
- Amend HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL or attach a budget footnote to direct DHHS to make meaningful rate increases for CFI home health providers so people can get the care and the support they need to live in their homes.

Mary Schiavoni:

- Mary is speaking on behalf of Adimab, LLC, a global biotechnology company headquartered in Lebanon. Adimab strongly opposed HB 544 before it was

rightly tabled in the NH House of Representatives, and they continue to firmly oppose its back door incarnation as the divisive concepts amendment to budget bill HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

- This amendment tramples on First Amendment rights to free speech, represents government overreach, and will impede the ability of New Hampshire businesses to attract and retain top talent.
- Adimab has a highly diverse workforce of discerning scientists, engineers and researchers for whom inquiry and debate are essential drivers of success in the workplace and in their industry.
- Adimab competes with research centers across the country and the globe to recruit the best talent to New Hampshire. This is a challenge that will become immeasurably harder if our state is viewed as a regressive and intolerant place to live and work, as is sure to be the case if the divisive concepts amendment is passed into law.
- Vote down the divisive concepts amendment, and in doing so maintain New Hampshire's standing as a business-friendly state that supports inclusive and empowered work environments unencumbered by restrictive legislation.

Rep. Tim Horrigan:

- Rep. Horrigan represents Durham, the home of the University System. He sees no point in merging USNH with the Community College System at this time.
- Durham is also the home of the Small Business Development Center. The House increased the SBDC's funding from \$50,000 to \$450,000 over the biennium, but the increase was merely an increase over the Governor's original proposal.
- The House Finance Committee took \$400,000 from the Travel and Tourism budget, which shows how shortsighted state government is.
- The budget contains some very small tax cuts, which will supposedly attract businesses from other states. No one is going to move their business here from out of state, however, just because our business taxes went down a fraction of a percentage point. The secret to growing our economy is to grow the businesses which are already here. The tax cuts in the budget will accomplish nothing aside from lowering state revenues, which is not a good thing.
- The budget includes an abortion "gag-rule" provision, which would almost certainly shut down every reproductive health facility in the state.
- Craft a budget that the House, Senate and the Governor can sign.

Heather Carroll:

- Heather represents the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging.
- Investing in home and community-based services is a cost effective way to build infrastructure to support older adults who live here.
- New Hampshire needs a home and community system that works for all of us.
- Currently, there is a patchwork of services which leads to significant gaps and unmet needs. The result is that too many older adults end up in more expensive institutionalized care, when they truly want to remain in their homes and communities.

- There are cost effective measures the Senate can take now to improve home and community-based services. Support budget requests that include critical increases to 3 Medicaid services under the Choices for Independence Waiver. They are personal care, homemaker services and case management.
- Presumptive eligibility should be fully funded.
- The gap in adult medical day services should be looked at, and raise the daily rate to \$75. This investment of state dollars over the biennium is a cost effective way to keep older adults in their communities longer. It also encompasses those who truly need to have caregiver support for folks who are still in the working world.
- They would like to see the \$1.5 million for senior centers to support services for older adults struggling with mental health and social isolation. During the pandemic, senior centers helped many seniors with telehealth services and with the social isolation for those folks who live alone.

Guy Chapdelaine:

- Guy is a member of the NH AARP/Capital City Taskforce.
- CFI is a cost effective program for seniors or adults with disabilities.
- In a typical year a significant portion of the funding for CFI goes unused because the number of visits made falls far short of those funded. This has occurred repeatedly over a number of recent bienniums.
- In FY 2020, between 31 percent and 45 percent of the funded visits were not made for skilled nursing home visits, home health aide short and long visits, personal care visits and homemaker services. This shortfall resulted in at least \$11 million in appropriated funds not being spent and lapsing to the General Fund.
- This money should be used to increase the availability of services that can help people remain safely at home
- One of the primary reasons for the shortfall in the various types of visits is the low level of reimbursement funded by the state through Medicaid. It's extremely difficult to hire staff to perform these services when the rate of reimbursement is so low in comparison to compensation paid for far less skilled positions in other businesses.
- Greater transparency in rate setting is needed to ensure that rates cover the cost of services to be performed.
- Ensure that rates for services for seniors and adults with physical disabilities are set comparably to rates for services to other groups receiving similar services.
- Expedite eligibility determinations for these services so that seniors and adults with disabilities receive their services in a timely manner.

Kate Frey:

- There are several harmful provisions included in the House budget including: 1) abolishing the Enforcement Division of the NH State Liquor Commission, jeopardizing the safe operation of alcohol establishments; 2) banning dissemination of certain "divisive concepts" like unconscious bias related to sex

and race that are critical to addressing public health disparities across New Hampshire; 3) defunding essential health reproductive health care providers during a pandemic; and 4) eliminating \$50 million and 226 positions from DHHS in "back-of-the-budget" cuts that could limit our ability to overcome COVID-19 and respond to future public health crises.

- New Futures' Five-Point Plan for a Health State Budget is comprised of 5 initiatives, if fully funded in the NH state budget, will go far to address issues resulting from the pandemic, overcome health disparities for historically marginalized groups, and prevent adverse health impacts on NH's children and families. These initiatives include: 1) supporting critical local and state public health programs and services; 2) ensuring access to health care by supporting a strong health care workforce; 3) supporting efforts to sustain and grow behavioral health services; 4) sustaining investments that help mitigate and prevent childhood trauma to help Granite State children and families thrive; and 5) protecting children's behavioral health programs and services to ensure coordinated and timely care for Granite State youth.
- Investments are needed in community health workers, the state's health care workforce, youth prevention programs and family supports.
- Include \$1.2 million over the biennium to support a community health worker position in each of the 13 public health networks.
- Increase funding for the student loan repayment program or make unspent SLRP funds in the current budget nonlapsing.
- Fully fund DHHS' request of \$220,000 per year to fund tobacco cessation services directed at youth trying to quit vaping.
- Restore \$1.37 million for family resource centers and primary prevention programs within the department.

Emily Johnson:

- Emily is the state manager for Save the Children Action Network.
- They oppose cuts to employment-related childcare funding in the state budget.
- Employment-related childcare funds grant assistance to hard working families with young children. Parents are income-eligible for the assistance benefit by having the ability to continue to work and earn a living while their children receive high quality care and education. Without this assistance, New Hampshire children would miss out on that high quality care and foundational education, while their parents would likely miss out on earnings or career advancement, and would be forced to stay home with the kids.
- Employment-related childcare assistance is essential not only for child wellbeing but for working parents and their ability to earn money for basic costs for survival.
- It's not unlikely for income-eligible families to wind up qualifying for increased state aid assistance when denied a childcare scholarship.
- More families will require childcare assistance in the coming years.
- Provide at least level funding for employment-related childcare in FY 2022/2023.

Megan Tuttle:

- Meagan is President of NEA New Hampshire.
- Refrain from including a school voucher plan like SB 130, which downshifts costs onto local taxpayers.
- Pass a public school funding formula that is more equitable and accounts for the pandemic effects on school budgets.
- Remove entirely and without replacement the harmful language of HB 544.
- Regarding SB 130, do we really want to make things worse for local property taxpayers? To date, there has been no financial analysis completed from the LBAO on this bill.
- We appreciate our teachers for many things, including their ability to spark our young peoples' minds with critical thinking skills; the language from HB 544 would stifle that.
- Our country is at a crossroads with respect to racial and gender equity and inclusion. These discussions in the classroom and in the workplace are tools we use in this country to combat systemic racism and gender inequality.
- This budget can be a better representation of the priorities the people of New Hampshire hold.
- Support a strong public education for all by funding our schools and striving to be a more inclusive and just community.

Michelle Veasey:

- Michelle is the Executive Director of New Hampshire Businesses for Social Responsibility.
- The divisive concepts language in the budget is grossly out of step with New Hampshire's workplace culture. It will have a chilling impact on our workplaces and on our state. It is a bill that is intended to hold us back and maintain the structure which will allow racism and sexism to flourish.
- These 243 businesses value their employees, and are not afraid to do the hard work to erase the structural racism and sexism in our organizations, schools and businesses.
- Many of the state's largest employers have signed on to the testimony submitted.
- We strongly urge you to protect the state, its people, and its businesses from this dangerous and damaging legislation.
- Diversity helps us to approach challenges with an innovated lens.
- An inclusive environment helps all employees to share their ideas and know they are valued.
- This language will make New Hampshire less attractive to potential employees.
- Remove HB 544 from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.

Esperanza Rivera:

- Support the developmental services budget in HB 1-A and the people that carry out the work.

- Ms. Rivera has family members and friends who have been supported by the Moore Center for several years. The Moore Center is the lifeline to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- If you don't fund this program it would threaten the essential services that people with disabilities rely on to maintain their health and independence.
- Fully fund the developmental services budget.

Michael Kiess:

- Michael testified on behalf of Vital Communities, whose top priority is housing.
- Make a significant investment in the Affordable Housing Fund.
- Currently, there are not enough places to live to meet the needs of our seniors, working families or our youth.
- The current market is not meeting their individual and shared needs.
- This is a shared challenge. We cannot solve this alone. We need to enable and create solutions.
- Your leadership is essential. Public investment in the Affordable Housing Fund leverages private capital and town and federal resources. Investors can help shape a new housing future for our communities based on low interest funds available from the Affordable Housing Fund.
- It is time to act together.

Janet Ward:

- Janet is opposed to SB 130, a bill which should have serious independent review.
- By directing public tax dollars to a private scholarship organization rather than requiring taxpayers to send their tax dollars directly toward home schooling, religious or private schools, which taxpayers might not wish to support, the bill's sponsors are trying to avoid our state constitution's prohibition regarding the use of public tax dollars to support schools.
- New Hampshire's scholarship organization will be working on commission, and can be paid up to ten percent of every dollar it provides. This is an obvious conflict of interest.
- The bill's legislative oversight commission can only recommend legislative changes should it detect a problem.
- Your attention to these concerns is essential.

Douglas McNutt:

- Douglas is the Associate State Director for Advocacy at AARP NH.
- We need to do a better job providing home care services. We need a broad based array of services.
- The adult medical daycare program allows working people to keep their loved ones at home, which is critical.
- With the Medicare rates being as low as they are, many of these services have closed. It not only removes the service from Medicaid residents, it also takes it away from private payors who also need the same service.

- DHHS has suggested the presumptive eligibility be suspended. Rather, it should be fully funded. We need to get these services to people who need them in their homes as quickly as possible to avoid unnecessary institutionalization.

Mary Roberge:

- Fully fund all services for everyone receiving waived services.
- It is less expensive to allocate funds for adequate home care than to pay for institutionalized and/or nursing home care. Home care provides a healthy and safe living environment for those receiving services under the Choices for Independence and disability waivers. The current pandemic emphasizes the importance of ensuring New Hampshire residents, especially the elderly and physically disabled adults, continue to receive services and home care that provides for their wellbeing, safety and independence.
- It is important that services for our seniors and adults with physical disabilities are transparent in the rates that are established. It is equally important our seniors and adults with physical disabilities become eligible for these services in a timely manner.

Jonathan Weinberg:

- Mr. Weinberg is a member of the Concord School Board. The board opposes both SB 130 and HB 544.
- Most of the burden of the NH Retirement System has been shifted to the local taxpayers. Municipalities are carrying the brunt of these costs.
- We are not serving the needs of New Hampshire or the needs of its students with HB 544. If we want to attract young people to this state, HB 544 would not be the mechanism to retain these young folks. Remove this language from the budget.

Rev. Jason Wells:

- Rev. Wells is the Executive Director of the NH Council of Churches.
- Adopting a budget is essentially a moral and value-based process, rather than a strictly fiduciary one.
- Reject the HB 544 provisions placed into HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL. The sins of racism, sexism, genocide and more continue to wound our nation. Many of our churches are already having the needed, honest conversations on these and other difficult topics.
- Our budget must prioritize public education for all.
- The Legislature should adopt the "People's Budget".

Nancy Vaughn:

- The American Heart Association asks for the Senate's support in funding two of the most impactful ways to help improve health. Fund a food assistance program to help under-resourced and struggling citizens, and provide tobacco cessation resources to help youth stop vaping and adults trying to quit smoking.
- New Hampshire's food assistance program is a lifeline for thousands of Granite Staters, including children, the elderly and people with disabilities, who at

times struggle to put food on their tables. A modest investment of \$200,000 each year will create a dollar-for-dollar match of state funds to Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits spent on healthy produce at farmers markets and participating NH grocery stores. This will help increase food access, make diets healthier, and lessen chronic illnesses. The money spent on fruit and vegetables produces economic benefits for local farmers and communities, as well.

- One third of youth in our state are using tobacco products and many are now addicted to nicotine, caused largely by electronic cigarettes. The DHHS Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program has prioritized a cessation initiative specifically tailored for those under age 18. More people, including those on Medicaid, can be helped to quit smoking with additional funding. An investment of \$300,000 per year would support programs and help youth and adults quit tobacco and live healthier lives.
- Please remove a provision included in the House budget which repeals the enforcement authority of the NH Liquor Commission. The section abolishes 21 enforcement positions within the Division of Liquor Enforcement.
- Pull the language concerning divisive concepts.

John Willis:

- Remove from the budget Section 330 in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, "Propagation of Divisive Concepts".
- School curricula and staff training programs would become chaotic.
- There is no mechanism for defense against false accusations, and no provision for due process.
- The provisions contain expensive requirements for state agencies, contractors and subcontractors.

Matthew Gerding:

- Matthew is a middle school teacher and city councilor in Somersworth.
- Cities and towns throughout New Hampshire have been losing funding from the state year after year. These repeated gaps in funding are causing dramatic rises in local property taxes, as well as harmful cuts to essential services in our public schools.
- NH schools and communities have advocated for decades the state is not performing its constitutional duty to fund public schools and yet they continue to be neglected.
- The Commission to Study School Funding examined equitable and adequate solutions to the school funding crisis and drafted a proposal that would alleviate the burden on local taxpayers and help provide a stronger education to students. These proposals were intended to be incorporated into the state's budget.
- New Hampshire's education funding system remains extremely regressive, utilizes inaccurate funding models, is providing fewer resources to needier communities, and produces decreased educational outcomes for less-advantaged communities.

- Most importantly, the commission determined that the responsibility for these faults is due to the lack of funding by the state.
- The commission's recommendations will result in a true and complete reduction in local property taxes for the vast majority of New Hampshire's cities and towns. The commission's proposals are glaringly absent from HB 1-A and HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- Local property taxes are forced to rise in response to anemic state funding.
- The state needs to take dramatic efforts to reform the ways in which we fund public education.

Teresa Moler:

- Teresa is in remission from mental health problems.
- Providers and mental health facilities need funds from the government to provide treatment.
- On occasion, Teresa finds herself in need of emergency treatment. She wants to see 24/7 access to mental health treatment for all.

Rep. Mary Heath:

- This is not a budget that is good for New Hampshire citizens. It will result in higher property taxes.
- Do not promote SB 130. Vouchers are wrong for New Hampshire. They undermine public education and will put additional burdens on our education trust funds. Existing states that have adopted voucher programs are fraught with problems, fraud and lack of accountability for student learning.
- Remove the \$1 million SWEPT reduction and apply those dollars to our local schools based on the 20/21 formula. The SWEPT reduction is frivolous and benefits only property-rich towns, and leaves districts like Manchester significantly underfunded. It will result in higher property taxes, and the money that is spent will not benefit our schools.
- Incorporate SB 135 into the school funding portion of the budget to address the impact of COVID on the enrollment and free and reduced lunch cuts that cities and towns have experienced.

Deborah Nelson:

- Ms. Nelson is a member of the Coalition for a People's Budget.
- As a prior school teacher, she dealt with multiple complex issues such as slavery, native removal, reconstruction, the many amendments to the Constitution, economics and equality, civil rights and women's movements. Students came to understand the complexity of America's past. She never had a student damaged by a greater understanding of racism and sexism. The language of HB 544 does our young people a great disservice. Her students care deeply about this state and this country.
- Remove the language of HB 544 from the budget.
- Please support public education and educators by funding public schools adequately.

Sonia Prince:

- SB 130 is bad for our public schools.
- New Hampshire tends to spend the least amount of money on education. We need to change that.
- It will cost our state a ton of money.
- Planned Parenthood has helped many women who are in need.
- Regarding HB 544, history can't be whitewashed. This is just an attempt to try and stop talking about racism. It is real and exists everywhere. We need to educate people to check their biases.

Janet Perkins-Howland:

- Ms. Perkins-Howland is an OB GYN and is passionate about issues surrounding reproductive equity.
- When times are the toughest, birth control and preventative care become even more essential.
- When people find themselves poor, their lives chaotic, when they're struggling that's time they need help with reproductive care.
- She is a big believer in preventionism. Pap smears and mammograms can catch small problems before they become big or deadly.
- We need to fund these programs to help people take care of themselves and prevent more deadly and costly interventions in the future.
- Don't undercut funding for reproductive services in New Hampshire. It is good public policy.
- Passage of HB 544 would effectively suspend inquiry and dialog to improve patient outcomes based on bias.

Maris Toland:

- Ms. Toland is a resident physician at Dartmouth-Hitchcock.
- She is concerned about the physical and financial separation link, and how it affects the ability of providers to deliver the care our state's low income, uninsured families rely on.
- As a provider of reproductive health services, she is repeatedly told by patients how much they rely on family planning to receive cancer screenings, birth control, STD screenings and testing and treatment, as well as patients who have lifesaving diagnoses. Without that service, they could have lost their lives.
- This budget disproportionately marginalizes people in communities. It is poor public policy planning.
- What purpose does the divisive concept language serve? It sensors speech on things that have value. We should be expanding our language, our understanding and our discourse on systemic racism and gender inequality.

Dr. Marie Ramas:

- Dr. Ramas is President-elect of the NH Academy of Family Physicians.
- She has witnessed firsthand the challenges communities face as they strive to achieve the American dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

- Adding non-budgetary language into the language of HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL removes the focus on the important work our state faces as we emerge from the pandemic.
- She is deeply concerned her ability to practice medicine will be affected in an unethical manner in caring for both rural and urban patients.
- Community health centers in which she works receive both state and federal funds.
- Allowing divisive concepts into the budget will interfere with clinicians' ability to provide appropriate care that recognizes and validates the lived experiences of our patients.

Carrie Duran:

- She is a single mom of three articulate, smart, young ladies.
- Her youngest daughter, Katie, experiences Down Syndrome. She currently receives in-home supports through their area agency. The help of this amazing program helps Katie access her community safely and engage in developing skills she will need to live her best life. Carrie is very grateful for this program.
- Fully fund developmental services in the budget.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity is talked about in the Duran household. Having a child with a disability makes you become an activist and advocate from the moment your child is born.
- Speak up about injustice.
- Remove the divisive concept language.

Abigail Carey:

- Abigail is a current patient at the Derry Health Center.
- She accessed Planned Parenthood to secure safe birth control measures.
- She felt welcome in the health center. They helped her apply for affordable health care insurance.
- Experiencing the compassionate care of Planned Parenthood helped her refer them to others.
- By requiring providers who offer abortion services to physically and financially separate abortion services from other types of care, makes it more difficult for people like Abigail. This requirement is unnecessary and impossible for providers to comply with. It places undue burden on someone looking to make the best option for themselves.
- Without Planned Parenthood people would go without essential care, just because it is too expensive.

Carolyn Dever:

- Divisive concepts is not a New Hampshire idea. It is not a New Hampshire solution to a New Hampshire problem. It is identical to bills across the country that mirror the previous administration's efforts to censor conversations about complex issues of history, identity and equality. As employers across the state have made clear, the proposed legislation is regressive and, if passed, will do significant harm to New Hampshire's economy.

- Her son, Noah, is eager to learn all about the world around him. He is one of only a few Black children in his school. It is crucial not only for him but for all of his classmates to find ways to understand each other, to work together, to build our future together, in the context of their differences.
- We strengthen our communities when we recognize our differences and use them to work together. We are stronger together; we are weakened when we fear each other. When New Hampshire gives voice to all of its citizens, the state stands ready for future prosperity.
- Remove the divisive concepts bill from the state budget. Demonstrate that freedom of speech still means something to the "Live Free or Die" state.

Michael Claflin:

- Michael is the Executive Director of HEAD, a nonprofit housing developer in Littleton.
- There are obvious moral and ethical issues contained in the language of HB 544, as well as potential, economical ramifications to our state. It should be debated based on its language and its merits. It should not be attached to or included in the budget.

Lucas Meyer:

- Lucas is Chair of 603 Board, which looks to give voice and power to young working people in this state.
- He supports the "Save Our Granite Stages" Act. This is a new fund dedicated to some of the smaller music venues in our state which have been exceptionally hard hit by the pandemic, and face a long road towards recovery.
- A lack of culture and loneliness plague New Hampshire's young workers.
- This bill will bolster our live musical venues and bolster the cultural sector in our state, which is a huge economic driver. It is also a tool in our state's toolbox to attract and retain young people.
- Keep this fund intact in the budget.

Deb Howes:

- Mrs. Howes is Vice-President of the Nashua Teachers' Union and a member of the Executive Council of the NH AFL-CIO.
- School vouchers or as some might call them, "Education Freedom Savings Accounts", do not belong in the state budget. New Hampshire has a longstanding problem with underfunding its public schools, as witnessed by numerous lawsuits, i.e., Claremont and Claremont II. Currently, the state is being sued by a group of school districts lead by Con-Val. The voucher program envisioned by SB 130 does nothing to solve the problem of the disparate ability to fund an adequate education through local property taxes. In fact, it exacerbates it. Vouchers would drain \$70-\$90 million of limited education funding over three years to help students who are already in private schools or being homeschooled.

- A school like Ms. Howes' school in Nashua with 300 students, could potentially lose a classroom's worth of students in 2.5 years, and the funding that goes with them.
- With students leaving public schools under a voucher program, local districts will have to choose between raising property taxes or looking for program cuts that seem like extras such as arts, music, gifted programs, or consolidating classrooms or schools. This will force already struggling public schools to eliminate those markers of a quality education that every parent values most for their children.
- If adopted on its own or part of the budget, the voucher program envisioned in SB 130 would further disadvantage all public schools and do the most damage to those in property poor towns and cities.

Thomas Gaumont:

- Divisive concept is an undemocratic concept. If allowed to stay in the budget, it could set a precedent for creating an authoritarian form of education.
- John Dewey, who is viewed by many as the father of modern democratic education in the US, argued that curriculum should be relevant to students' lives, and include open discussions of current events and develops critical thinking skills. Most teachers support and advocate for continued democratic educational practices.
- Do you want to support democratic educational practices in our state or would you rather support an anti-democratic step as manifested in the divisive concept provision of the current budget being developed?

Coral Hampe:

- Coral is President of the Timberlane Teachers Association.
- Schools in our state are compared to schools nationwide and worldwide. Having a voucher program hurts the students who attend public schools. Even as funding is drained away, overhead costs remain. Districts will be forced to make cuts to programs like art, music, languages or sports.
- If we reallocate funding away from public schools, how do we give our students a well-rounded education that can compete worldwide?
- Do not include SB 130 in the budget. Let's give our public school students the best opportunities possible. Public dollars should stay with public schools.

Kate Hilton:

- One thing Kate loves about New Hampshire is our commitment to local control. HB 544 is the state government's direct control of the speech of state employees and contractors. We cannot live freely if we cannot speak freely.
- This legislation is not who we are. Its language is not from New Hampshire. This same bill is being proposed in ten other states.
- There are real budget implications and costs to the state to enforce this legislation, and to defend the lawsuits that will be filed on First Amendment grounds; to pursue litigation against those who will be morally justified to defy it.

- It is the ultimate irony that we need look no further than the language of HB 544 to see what state-perpetuated systemic racism and sexism looks like.
- Kate's son, Hans, expressed the importance of being able to speak openly with his teachers about systemic racism and sexism.
- HB 544 cancels New Hampshire's culture of local control, and our business communities' diversity, inclusion and equity efforts. It also cancels our teachers and students' freedom of speech.

Gary Cahoon:

- Mr. Cahoon is the owner and administrator of Friendship Manor in New Ipswich.
- DHHS has suggested the suspension of the presumptive eligibility statute be continued for another two years. Presumptive eligibility is a process to fast track eligibility for home and community-based services for those in desperate need of these services, who upon review are deemed highly likely to qualify for them.
- Studies in several states have indicated presumptive eligibility does not increase costs, but rather reduces them overall by reducing unnecessary nursing home placements.
- The median time to determine financial eligibility for the state is 65 days, and in many cases require more than 90 days. This means elderly and disabled citizens go without services when they critically need them. Further, the time to determine eligibility has been significantly and negatively impacted by the pandemic. The entire process has become much more cumbersome.
- Please allow presumptive eligibility to work as intended.
- Unmet needs are not easily determined in residential care because services are not authorized until a client finds a bed. Mr. Cahoon receives 2-3 referrals per week for the 3-4 beds he has per year.
- The rates are too low. As a result, people are often forced to go without services, or are unnecessarily sent to nursing homes. These CFI rates need to be addressed.

Mary Carlson:

- Mary is in support of the developmental services budget.
- Her family is connected to the Gateway Services agency in Nashua. Her adult daughter has developmental disabilities, being on the autistic spectrum, and suffers from mental health challenges including significant anxiety. She is bright but learns painfully slow. Teaching her requires a great deal of patience and knowledge. Anything she learns needs to be broken down into chunks.
- Mary's daughter benefits from her interactions with her service providers, who work very hard for very little pay. In recent years it has not always been easy to attract and retain staff to provide her services.
- During the early months of COVID visits were minimal and Mary's daughter suffered.
- If funding is eliminated or reduced, those who receive services will suffer the most, including our most vulnerable individuals.

- Fully fund services for those who cannot advocate for themselves. Our society will be judged on how we treat our most vulnerable individuals.

Julie Hilliard:

- Julie has spent the last 30 years struggling to keep the teeth of her 30 yr. old son, Cameron, healthy. He is a difficult case and requires an OR certified dentist. The Hilliards, therefore, are unable to seek low cost or income based dental services. These specialists are hard to find and do not accept payment plans. Many times they are forced to travel out of state to find him dental care.
- Every couple of years Julie starts the process of coming up with funding and grants to pay for the procedure. Payment has to be guaranteed before an appointment will be booked, and then it is usually several months to get an appointment.
- Cameron routinely goes without dental care for long periods due to the difficulty of getting care and finding a dentist willing to take him as a patient.
- What New Hampshire provides for Cameron currently under Medicaid is to wait until he has painful abscesses, and then have the teeth removed on a strictly emergency basis. The dentist can't even clean the teeth or do any other dental work during the procedure. That means Cameron would suffer unbearable pain indefinitely, and have his teeth pulled out one by one until he has no teeth. This is shameful and seems deliberately cruel.
- New Hampshire Medicaid can't even authorize exceptions for special cases like Cameron.
- Cameron has many challenges but Julie wants him to have healthy teeth for as long as possible, and she works very hard to make sure he will.

Elaine Fagga:

- Elaine has a son who is transitioning this year into adult services, and she is very concerned about the staffing issues in Sullivan County. Pathways has been unable to staff her son's in-home support program for the last 3 years. When his school program ends in August, Elaine is afraid her son will end up back home with her full-time. She will be forced to place him in a residential program, as she is unable to take care of him full-time.
- Elaine has a ward that is currently living out of state, and will turn 21 in January, and transitioning into adult services as well. Her ward lives out-of-state as there are no programs in New Hampshire to meet her needs.
- The lack of housing services for people with dual diagnoses are nonexistent for the most part in this state.
- Pathways has helped with financing for Elaine's van, transportation being a vital service.
- Currently, no adult members of Elaine's family have access to dental care.
- The low funding reimbursement rates of CFI impacts the ability to hire and train staffing. New Hampshire needs to step up their Medicaid reimbursement rates.

Regan Lamphier:

- Regan has close ties with the disability community in New Hampshire. Her son, Ethan, had a major stroke when he was 3 years old. That is when they qualified for a direct support, which allowed her to keep her job, insurance and her home. She supports her family financially.
- Ethan had serious developmental disabilities, and was medically complex. He passed away suddenly at the age of 8. If he had reached adulthood, their need for home and community-based service would have continued.
- Regan cares deeply for those with disabilities, including many of our seniors.
- Currently there is a dire workforce shortage in this state. The Choices for Independence program is essential to keeping these individuals in their homes and out of institutions.
- The pandemic has exposed the gaping holes in our state safety net. It doesn't benefit anyone when individuals fall through the cracks. There are children and families in dire need across New Hampshire. The crisis is real and growing.
- We have a moral and legal obligation to fully fund DHHS. If the department is funded properly, our families and communities will be stronger and more successful. That means a brighter future for everyone in New Hampshire.

Courtney Lawson:

- Courtney is currently on CFI. There is a major issue with staffing. She is receiving only half of her services, due to the low wages being paid.
- These rates must be raised.
- They deserve to be able to live independent lives.
- At the age of 40, Courtney does not want to go into a nursing home.

Kayla Berry:

- Kayla works for Courtney Lawson and assists her on the night shift. Courtney is a complete quadraplegic. Without the CFI funding there would be no way for Courtney to get out of bed. There have been times previously when Courtney has been left in bed for 4 days.
- Courtney is unable to access mental health services.
- Kayla has, at times, worked 2 weeks straight, morning and night as there were no other available aides. She has a full-time job elsewhere as well.
- Courtney's brother even helps out with her personal care.
- Many of the caregivers Courtney has had in the past left due to low wages. They've gone to work at McDonald's, which pays more.

Louisa Ledbetter:

- Louisa is the parent of a 22 year-old with developmental disabilities who is supported by Pathways.
- Finding support staff who have experience with or understanding of the disabled across a wide spectrum of disabilities is difficult when the highest hourly wage is much less than a school paraprofessional. The job itself is much more difficult than a paraprofessional as they are responsible for those they support out in the community as well as in the home. They are entirely on their own when they provide this support. They should be entitled to a wage

competitive for what they do. Parents entrust them with the physical, social and emotional support of their child, as well as helping to build functional life skills.

- It is hard to get the best quality when the wage offered is so low. When you find dedicated staff who are willing to train and learn how to best care and support for your child, you want to be able to keep them. A fair wage is one way to do that. Not being able to offer a fair wage also significantly reduces the pool of candidates from which we can choose support staff for our children.
- Fully fund the developmental services budget to allow for a more competitive wage for support staff to work with the disabled in New Hampshire.

Annie Johnson:

- If this budget becomes law, thousands of Granite Staters like Annie would be at risk of losing access to critical, lifesaving health care.
- For thousands of people, under-insured or uninsured, there are no other viable options waiting in the wings to do this work.
- The average hospital ER, in a pandemic, cannot take on the task of providing these thousands of people with routine testing, early intervention for HIV exposure, checkups and providing birth control and free contraception. These people will either take on astronomical debt or go without care.
- Preventative health care saves taxpayer dollars at a rate of one dollar spent for every seven dollars saved.
- Planned Parenthood serves a huge community, literally 72 percent of the entire family planning program, and their services throughout New Hampshire ensure that anyone can access birth control, cancer screenings, checkups and STD testing.

Dr. Sue Kim:

- As a psychologist, Dr. Kim is obligated to speak up against HB 544 as it violates three of her profession's ethical principles and code of conduct.
- Her ethics code requires her to operate with integrity. For decades, psychology research has found that systemic racism, institutional, interpersonal and internalized racism all exist, and need to be discussed and addressed in order for people and our society at large to heal. If HB 544 passes, it would be illegal in the state for psychologists to present accurate, honest and truthful information about racism and sexism, information supported by empirical data.
- Dr. Kim's ethics code also requires her to uphold justice. If HB 544 passes, psychologists in this state would not be permitted to offer workshops, training and seminars designed to help people understand how unconscious bias operates, strategies to cope with psychological distress and discomfort related to discussing racism, and ways to become resilient rather than avoiding these important topics. Avoiding discussing something often makes things much worse than just learning how to talk about it.
- Dr. Kim's ethics code requires her to operate with respect for people's rights and dignity. As a psychologist, she must be aware of and respect people's

differences, and attempt to eliminate her own biases. HB 544 would outlaw the training she would need in assessing and monitoring her hidden biases.

- Remove HB 544 from the budget bill.

Nirav Kapadia:

- Mr. Kapadia is a person of color, a father and a husband. He is a cancer doctor who serves in an underserved, rural, almost entirely white population in the North Country.
- To defund Planned Parenthood would devastate his patients. Many of them have their cancer screenings and detection through Planned Parenthood.
- Racism hurts white people as well.
- Black people are twice as likely to be ignored when having a heart attack, severe back pain or a migraine. To be able to talk about these things lets us understand these things. If we can understand these things, only then can we fix them.
- HB 544 is government overreach at its worse. How will it be funded?

Rev. Dr. Gail Kinney:

- Dr. Kinney represents the Economic Justice Team of the United Church of Christ.
- A state budget conveys what we value. The budget the House delivered to the Senate is not a People's Budget, nor a moral budget. The House does not value health and human services based on the proposed back-of-the-budget cuts to an absolutely essential state agency. The House doesn't seem to value safe and accessible reproductive and related health services for women in New Hampshire. The House doesn't value providing needed adequacy support for public schools. But, apparently, the House does give priority to shifting adequacy costs downward to local property taxpayers, with the low income and municipalities being hurt the most.
- HB 544 calls for the censoring of public agencies, state contractors and public educational institutions when it comes to training or teaching about systemic racism or sexism and implicit bias, all things which are still among us. This language has no business in the budget trailer bill, and in New Hampshire statute period. It is breathtakingly vague, it calls for censorship, it mandates that certain topics can be discussed only "without endorsement". It calls upon the Department of Administrative Services to become the "thought police". It is incredibly frightening in its scope, and is completely unworkable. If this language becomes law, it will become a national story, and it won't be a positive story for New Hampshire. It will bring shame and economic consequences.
- Crafting HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL is not a game. Remove this language entirely from the budget trailer bill.

Alex Koutroubas:

- Dennehy & Bouley have many clients with strong interests in the state budget.
- Fully support long-term supports and services under DHHS.

- We also need to support our state's hospitals, assisted living homes, senior centers, Meals on Wheels, and our fellow citizens with disabilities.
- They are strongly opposed to the divisive concepts language in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- Dennehy & Bouley represents ACEC-NH, an engineering firm in this state. Many of these clients work for state agencies. New Hampshire's engineers oppose contractual language that is unreasonable and overly burdensome to comply with.
- We will put important state contracts at risk if we go down this road. Remove the language from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- Restore the state aid grant program for our cities and towns.
- Fully fund DOT's budget to continue to keep the traveling public safe.

Dr. Clare O'Grady:

- Dr. O'Grady is a family medicine resident physician. She practices medicine in a rural clinic. Bucolic landscapes, fresh farm produce and neighborly waves unfortunately mask the health care disparities her rural patients face.
- In the past year of her practice, Dr. O'Grady has listened to her patients' stories about newfound poverty as the few local businesses in town closed their doors. She's witnessed retrogression in their mental health at the hands of pandemic-induced seclusion atop the physical seclusion they already possess simply by being a rural resident. Most tragically, she has watched them decline lifesaving treatments because they can no longer afford the gas to drive the forty miles to specialty clinics.
- New Hampshire is a state that is comprised of an expansive and proud rural population that already struggles with access. Ultimately, limiting availability to medically-proven, safe, family planning programs, as is suggested in HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL, will further widen this gap. This will be true especially for Dr. O'Grady's rural patients, for rural women, and for herself.
- This goes against the very autonomy that this state boasts and promises to its residents.

Janine Lademan:

- Janine is opposed to any cuts to the mental health services budget. She has a 19 yr. old son and is desperately seeking mental health services for him. He has been experiencing delusions and has been hallucinating. She was able to admit him to the ER department, but he needed hospitalization. He stayed in the ER for one week while his mental health unraveled. He was finally transferred to a stabilization unit in Manchester, where he was placed on medication. After five days he was sent home.
- Janine cannot get an appointment for her son until mid-July. His medication is running out and she can't find anyone to manage his refills.
- In the meantime she has called every psychiatrist, counselor, hospital and counseling center in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. Most places don't bother to return a call.

- Just today they went back to a different ER but her son was turned away. Apparently, her son is not psychotic enough for hospitalization and services.
- What will it take to get help? Where are the services in this state? The lack of mental health resources in this state is shameful.
- Dedicate and prioritize funds and resources to provide mental health services to those who so desperately need it.

Anna Shultz:

- Anna is a home health social worker and a private geriatric care manager. She supports the proposed rate increases for the CFI program. Many of the individuals she assists are in dire need of more hours to meet the assigned hours by the state.
- Should she report CFI to the state Adult Protective Services program for neglect? How can she help these patients get the services they need? If they received the appropriate level of care, most of them would be able to stay in their own home.
- The rate increase would help secure consistent staff, have a regular schedule of living and ensure the type of help needed to the CFI recipients is available day, night and weekends. The proposed rate increases are needed to make sure people on the CFI program are assisted in their home in order to stay in their home.
- Support the rate increase to CFI in this budget as it will directly impact your constituents and is the economically, sound choice over more costly institutionalized care.

William Rescsanski:

- Property-poor towns like Charlestown will not receive adequate aid for school funding.
- Property-rich towns like Newington pay \$2.70 per thousand dollars of property value for school funding. Charlestown pays \$24.89 per thousand dollars of property value as it is a property-poor town. This is nine times more than Newington's.
- Charlestown spends so much money on school funding that it always looks for ways to cut or constrain municipal spending. The town cannot grow or do fun things like hire a recreation director. It struggles to maintain existing assets. Residents like William cannot afford to retire in Charlestown.
- Every year Charlestown has at least 20 properties with delinquent taxes. Ten were sold last weekend.
- It is hopeful the Con-Val lawsuit will solve these problems.
- Charlestown's tax rate would be much lower if the state provided adequate funding for students.
- Please increase aid for school funding for property-poor towns with low equalized value per pupil. HB 623 would have done this. Include this bill, or something like it in the state's budget.
- According to the NH School Funding Fairness Project, 4.4 percent of the SWPT reduction flows to 20 most property poor towns in New Hampshire.

- The New Hampshire Constitution requires taxes to be proportionate and reasonable.

Ilyssa Sherman:

- The current budget makes it impossible for reproductive health centers to be part of the New Hampshire family planning program because of unnecessary requirements designed to defund abortion care providers.
- This language is clearly only intended to make it impossible for reproductive health centers to participate in the family planning program, even though 79 percent of patients in the program are cared for at reproductive health centers. Ilyssa has been one of those patients.
- Ilyssa's father passed away two months prior to her wedding. She had just turned 26 and was relying on her father for health insurance until her wedding. Her only option was to go on COBRA, but with the waiting period Ilyssa went without insurance for two weeks. During this time period she had a flare up with endometriosis, and had been seeing a specialist to manage her condition. However, she could not afford to see the specialist without insurance.
- Ilyssa made an appointment at her local Planned Parenthood health center, where she received the patient-centered care she needed at the time. In a time in her life when she felt so incredibly broken, the staff at Planned Parenthood helped her start the process of picking up the pieces.
- Four years later Ilyssa is a sexual and reproductive health nurse. She now speaks as both a former patient and as a caregiver to this population. Many of her patients have low incomes or are uninsured and rely on the low or no-cost services provided through the family planning program. They deserve access to preventative care. Don't take this care away, especially during a time when accessibility is already an incredibly large barrier.
- Reproductive health services are so greatly needed for people all across New Hampshire. It is completely unacceptable that this budget prioritizes slashing access to preventative health care, especially in the midst of a pandemic.
- If finalized, this budget will cause an undue physical and psychological burden on people all across New Hampshire, and will result in a public health disaster for this state.

Laura Vincent:

- SB 130, Education Freedom Accounts, should be omitted from HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL.
- There is a lack of accountability in this bill for student outcomes in the language about EFAs. Although the language has been amended to include three choices to measure student progress, a large loophole remains. The three choices listed to assess student progress are: (1) using the NH state assessment used in public schools; (2) using another standardized test; and (3) using an evaluation of a portfolio of student work. This assessment by portfolio evaluation is where the loophole lies.
- For instance, a student being homeschooled could have their portfolio evaluated by any "teacher" selected by the parent. The teacher doing the evaluation,

perhaps a relative or friend of the family, does not have to be certified and does not have to have experience at the student's grade level, such as a non-certified teacher working in a private kindergarten evaluating a high school student's portfolio.

- There is no language requiring this portfolio evaluation to be reported to the state or school district, only to the scholarship organization. The scholarship organization is not authorized or required to do anything further with the portfolio, and is not authorized or required to terminate an EFA even if the student shows no progress year after year.
- Although this situation may not occur frequently, when it does occur, there is no recourse for addressing the student's unmet needs.
- This issue could be considered under the increased scrutiny of a stand-alone bill.

Mary Wilke:

- It is critical the entire \$89 million funding loss that school districts are facing be restored to the budget. Even with this money, many of our districts will remain grossly underfunded. This is a bare minimum.
- Don't included SB 130, the voucher bill, in the budget. The bill needs the kind of close scrutiny it can only get as a stand-alone bill. SB 130 has many problems associated with it.
- The private nonprofit and for-profit educational service providers that would be paid with our money are not required to have any particular credentials, licenses or certification, or even to conduct criminal background checks on employees who would be working with children.
- Nothing in the bill prevents employees of the scholarship organization or their family members from setting up their own for-profit tutoring service or therapy center, steering parents to those providers, and then paying them with our taxpayer dollars.
- Why does the bill grant the scholarship organization immunity from legal liability? They won't be held to the usual standard of reasonable care that applies to the rest of us. We the taxpayers have the right to expect them to use reasonable care if they are going to handle tens of millions of dollars of our collective money.
- The LBAO has not issued a detailed fiscal analysis of the impact of this bill. Meanwhile, the DOE has made some fiscal predictions that need more scrutiny.
- If a child took an EFA, the associated public school would lose the adequacy money and differentiated aid it would otherwise receive on the child's behalf. Yet the child could continue to attend public school for up to 50 percent of each week for the remainder of the child's school life.
- If the child had special needs the public school would remain responsible for addressing all of the special needs, which can be very expensive, without receiving any of that state assistance. The money would be going to the private school which would have no obligation to provide special ed services.
- Don't place SB 130 into the budget.

Morgan Wilson:

- The House budget defunds Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and independent abortion providers. It defunds essential health care providers during a pandemic.
- As a former patient of Planned Parenthood, Morgan knows firsthand the importance of the reproductive health services they offer. She has the knowledge she can always return to Planned Parenthood for understanding, compassionate care. They offer high quality care while making it affordable for those under-insured or uninsured.
- Many are only able to access vital reproductive health care through Planned Parenthood.
- This program is greatly needed for people like Morgan all across the state.
- This budget will cause significant harm to public health in New Hampshire, and reduce the access residents have to affordable health care services.
- Please oppose this language in the budget.

James Bomersbach:

- Mr. Bomersbach is a licensed psychologist in New Hampshire.
- HB 544 is based on factual falsehoods. The claims made about Critical Race Theory and other theories are not based in reality.
- We should be focused on increasing discussion of bias, in all of its forms, across this state. That is how we are going to do as much as we can to eliminate these from society. That should be our goal.
- This bill puts us in the wrong direction.
- In consideration of the practical side of this, there are costs associated with this that are not included in the bill, including enforcement and the inevitable legal challenges.
- New Hampshire could lose out on important infusions of money to the state because we will become one of the few states who has passed this type of hateful rhetoric.

Rep. Larry Welkowitz:

- As the Chair of the Psychology Department at Keene State College, disgusting, divisive concepts are at the heart of academics. Classroom conversations are essential to breaking down core issues.
- They talk about institutional racism in professional psychology. Why are there so few blacks in psychology?
- In New Hampshire there is no public program for doctoral level education in clinical psychology. We may be the only state in the country without one.
- Can we talk about differential impacts on people with different economic status? We must.
- We can't simply avoid divisive concepts if we are to effectively review and discuss all these types of topics.
- A vote for this bill is a strike against the academic process. The language won't be followed in academia.
- There will be an immediate First Amendment challenge in court, that will sadly have to be paid for by the citizens of New Hampshire.

- Oppose this section of the budget.

Dan Weeks:

- Dan is a Director and Co-Owner of ReVision Energy.
- Their business is always concerned with bringing their employees back, particularly female employees.
- Keep the budget level funded so that families experiencing hardship during the pandemic can afford childcare they need to keep working, or get back to work. This will ensure equity in the workforce.
- ReVision Energy has been awarded many public sector contracts to install energy systems for different municipalities and school districts. It's not the state's business what internal trainings they offer their employees to support an inclusive workplace.
- They struggle to meet their workforce needs. They need to retain young people and attract new workers out of state to New Hampshire.
- Passing the language of HB 544 will be a black eye for our state. It will attract a lot of national negative attention.
- It will make it harder to create the kind of diverse, productive, inclusive workforce that is good for their business and for our state.
- The requirements of HB 544 are onerous.

Crystal Paradis:

- Crystal was diagnosed with menorrhagia. The symptoms leave her unable to work or do any usual tasks a few days each month. She was uninsured and reached out to Planned Parenthood for help.
- As Crystal was uninsured and low-income, the services Planned Parenthood provided her were 100 percent covered by family planning funding.
- This access to timely, compassionate care changed Crystal's life.
- Everyone is aware of the potential gap in Title X funding for family planning services here in New Hampshire. Cutting this critical gap funding would be unnecessarily cruel as we recover from the biggest health crisis in generations.
- Amend HB 1-A to include funding for this 9-month gap for family planning.

Hunter Porter:

- The Nashua High School South Democrats oppose HB 2-FN-A-LOCAL because of the horrendous inclusion of HB 544. The bill would prohibit students from truly learning the history of our country. Teachers would be unable to fully discuss the racism and sexism that colors the past and present of this country.
- As can be seen in the police killings that engulf our news, police officers have a clear bias against people of color. This bias has fatal consequences. Bias training is a necessary and extremely important part of police training. Prohibiting the state from providing bias training opens the door to racism and sexism in many workplaces.
- Racial sensitivity training helps people of color and women from experiencing micro-aggressions that white people may not have been aware of before the

training. This is extremely harmful to marginalized groups because they will not feel completely safe in their workplaces.

- People should not expect to experience racism and sexism in their workplaces. Some may say if people feel uncomfortable in their workplace, they should leave. This is not a choice for many New Hampshire citizens.

Nicolette Gallibrano:

- Private schools are often more well funded, and can offer exciting opportunities that our public schools have been forced to cut by repeated reductions in state funding.
- The private school and the scholarship organization benefit from education freedom accounts, not the family.
- When private schools give students scholarships based on need, they ask to see what resources the family has available to them, including any other grants and scholarships. They take these resources into account.
- There are much better uses for state funds for education. This is just one of the many flaws and gaps in SB 130 that need to be considered and addressed. It's unlikely in a budget year the Legislature will have the capacity to do so.
- SB 130 should not be rolled into the budget.

Dennis Calcutt:

- Dennis is the Director of Connected Families NH. They have benefited from children's mental health services. They are a care management entity for the state.
- If HB 544 remains in the budget, they would be in direct conflict of its provisions. They would probably have to return grant money to the federal government, and cease the work they are doing. This would hamper the progress they have made around the system of care work, as well as children's mental health.

Katrina Miamis:

- Katrina suffers from endometriosis, which made her physically incapable of going to work. Her pain was greatly reduced by having an IUD inserted at the Lovering Health Center in Greenland. She no longer misses work due to pain.
- A cut in funding will be a reduction in resources, and women like Katrina will go untreated.
- Don't exclude the Lovering Health Center from the state's family planning program.

Former Sen. Melanie Levesque:

- No one should be blamed or made to feel guilty for the acts of the past.
- What may seem divisive to one person, may be a life experience of another.
- Sen. Levesque's own parents were unable to purchase a home as the realtor would not sell it to them. Their neighbors voted on whether to allow them to move into the neighborhood.

- Unbiased information is very difficult to find these days. Public institutions are defunded and speech is stifled. Neighbors turn against neighbors.
- Our government puts divisive language such as HB 544 into our laws.
- Remove the divisive language from the state budget. Produce a budget that allows all of our people in New Hampshire not just to survive, but to thrive.

Rep. Matt Wilhelm:

- Rep. Wilhelm's legislative district encompasses the heart of downtown Manchester and the historic Millyard.
- He supports the Save our Granite Stages Act.
- Downtown Manchester is home to a number of small to mid-size performance venues.
- The live music industry was the first to close during the pandemic, and will be among the last to reopen.
- It's been heartbreaking to see how the pandemic has impacted the livelihood of Rep. Wilhelm's friends and former coworkers.
- There was a clear, direct increase in direct economic activity on nights when there was a show in town.
- It's critical we do what we can to support these economic drivers for communities across our state.
- Include Save our Granite Stages Act in the state budget.

Karen Blake:

- Fully fund all the line items for developmental disabilities services in the budget, and the people who carry out the work, such as direct support professionals.
- Support the adult dental benefit, as well as funding for the 10-Year Mental Health Plan.
- Her 14 yr. old son has been diagnosed with autism and ADHD, and is currently supported by Northern Human Services through the In-Home Supports Waiver.
- They have also received family-centered supports and services in the past.
- They consider themselves lucky having been able to find a provider for their son. It took them two years to find one. These services are helping their son to work on social interaction, using money and beginning to cook using the microwave. Someday, likely, he will need support to be a successful adult.
- As a Medicaid recipient he will need adult dental benefits and employment support to live as independently as possible. He may need mental health services and support as well.

Rep. Maria Perez:

- We need to work at diversity inclusion.
- HB 544 doesn't belong in the budget.
- More people in our communities are suffering from mental illness due to the pandemic. We are losing many lives. We need to provide more of these services.

David Docken:

- David has a sister who has been on the CFI program for a number of years.
- This program helps her and is essential.
- There is not enough money to pay caregivers to come into the home and provide the services required.
- There should be more oversight to guarantee these services are actually performed, and the caregivers are trained.
- Without this funding costs will increase for the state on many different levels.

dm

Date Hearing Report completed: May 23, 2021