

**Senate Executive Departments and Administration  
Committee**  
*Phil Jasak 271-1403*

**HB 228**, relative to repealing the commission on demographic trends.

**Hearing Date:** April 12, 2023

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Pearl, Gendreau, Perkins Kwoka and Altschiller

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senator Carson

**Bill Analysis:** This bill repeals the statutory reference to the commission on demographic trends.

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**Sponsors:**  
Rep. G. Griffin

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**Who supports the bill:** Rep. Griffin

**Who opposes the bill:** Rep. Schmidt

**Who is neutral on the bill:** None

**Summary of testimony presented:**

**Senator Gendreau for Rep. Griffin**

- This bill repeals the statutory reference to the commission on demographic trends.

**Representative Schmidt  
(Strafford District 14)**

- Rep. Schmidt began his testimony by asking the committee who has tape over their gas gauge on their car. Further added that the committee would probably agree that this would be somewhat senseless as the gauge notifies the driver what the future driving range will be, before refilling the tank.
- Rep. Schmidt stated that this repeal bill only has one sponsor who is also the current chair of the commission.
- Provided a story of 15 years ago where he heard a presentation by a nationally recognized demographer. Found that this presentation showed the representative the things that demographics touch in regards to state decisions, predictions, and policies. Noted that New Hampshire has the second oldest population in the United States and this has real implications for what the

legislature needs to plan for, and what they need to know about in order to legislate wisely.

- Rep. Schmidt provided examples of state governance that necessitates demography such as; school funding, retirement, and the economy. Further stated that all aspects of New Hampshire life is impacted by the population it has and where that population is and where it's going.
- Stated that the University of New Hampshire has an excellent Department of Demography which Rep. Griffin testified before the house ED&A committee, but that this institution is of no use to us if the state is paying no attention to demographics. Emphasized that the importance of this commission is to use the demography trends and data to better inform state decisions.
- Acknowledged Rep. Griffin's issues addressed in house ED&A about the difficulty in getting a quorum, but Rep. Schmidt said that this quorum issue is not solved by repealing the commission. Instead Rep. Schmidt said this would be like putting a sack over the head of the legislature.
- Provided the house vote on HB 228 and noted that the house voted on the recommendations of the house ED&A committee which is made up of members who have not been in the house for very long, and thus not as experienced with the importance of demographic trends.
- Urge the committee to ITL HB 228, as we cannot wisely deprive ourselves of information of this importance in making wise legislative decisions.
- Sen. Pearl asked Rep. Schmidt whether this commission has ever met.
- Rep. Schmidt responded that he does not know whether the commission has ever met because Rep. Griffin has only been in the legislature for a couple of terms so he has very limited history with the commission. Stated that commission was re-adopted a couple of years ago and that it was not brand new at the time of re-adoption, and stated that the fact that the legislature adopted such a commission indicates that this commission was a wise idea to have this guidance to help with policy development.
- Sen. Pearl noted that this commission was just reinstated in 2022, and therefore has not been up and running for more than a year.
- Rep. Schmidt emphasized this concern of Sen. Pearl.
- Sen Altschiller asked whether former colleague Peter Francis was part of the push for the state to look at demographic changes in New Hampshire in a way to inform policy.
- Rep. Schmidt stated that Peter Francis is the demographer he referred to in his testimony and was recognized as an expert in the field of demography.

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Date Hearing Report completed: April 18, 2023