

AFT-NH Legislative Bulletin

2017-01



*AFT-NH, AFT, AFL-CIO
“Union of Professionals”*

*Bow, NH
January 6, 2017*

The New Hampshire legislative session has begun. On Wednesday, the House and Senate adopted basic rules and on Thursday, January 5, Governor Chris Sununu was inaugurated, replacing Maggie Hassan in the corner office. In his inaugural address, Governor Sununu called for greater bipartisan cooperation, but then undermined his stance by highlighting support for so-called “Right to Work” legislation as one of his top priorities.

With majorities in both the House and the Senate, Republicans are wasting little time in launching their anti-labor and anti-worker agenda. A hearing is already scheduled for Tuesday, January 10 at 1 pm in Representatives Hall, when the Senate Commerce Committee will hear testimony on [SB 11](#), a right-to-work proposal sponsored by thirteen Republican senators. If passed, this bill would eliminate agency or ‘fair share’ payments which exist in many union contracts. Individuals who do not wish to join the union but who are part of the bargaining unit often must pay these fees to defray the costs of negotiating and maintaining the contract which sets their wages and benefits, provides protections, and governs their workplace. Under so-called “right to work,” all such fees or payments would be prohibited. What “right to work” does NOT do is

- a. guarantee anyone a job
- b. prohibit forcing people to join unions—that is ALREADY against the law.

The goals of “right to work” legislation are simple: to weaken the financial base of organized labor and thereby reduce the power of working people and their ability to organize and collectively bargain. There is and there will be much noise about protecting individual freedoms, but ironically, “right to work” injects the State into negotiations, infringing on local control and creating new restrictions on bargaining by employers and employees. More restriction, more intervention, not more freedom.

We are calling on as many members and retirees as possible to attend Tuesday’s hearing. If you would like to attend, please email me at dley@aft-nh.org. If you would like to offer brief testimony

on why you support your union and believe everyone should pay their fair share, let me know at dley@aft-nh.org and I will connect you to those who are organizing the testimonies.

We also need you to **TAKE ACTION** by contacting your Senator and telling her/him that you oppose right-to-work and that it will reduce your standard-of-living by leading to lower wages and fewer benefits. The time to act is NOW! This is a simple click and send process.

Elsewhere, AFT-NH has identified over 200 House and Senate bills that we will be monitoring over the next few months . The list is posted on the AFT-NH website at [AFT-NH Bill Watch List \(1-5-17\)](#) and will be updated throughout the session. Next week, there are a number of important education bills receiving their initial hearings, and AFT-NH will be watching their progress very closely.

We are in for a rough ride this upcoming legislative session, but as Benjamin Franklin reportedly said so many years ago at the signing of our Declaration of Independence, “We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately.” Let’s work together, let’s pursue solidarity, and let’s protect the hard-fought rights won by our unions for all working people.

To see what bills are scheduled for hearings in the NH House, visit <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/default.aspx> and scroll down to the calendar. For Senate hearings, visit <http://gencourt.state.nh.us/senate/default.aspx>.

In Solidarity,

Douglas Ley
President, AFT-NH