



PRESS RELEASE: House Supports Education Funding Increases, Ignores *Rand* Court Rulings

February 22 – The Full House of Representatives advanced two bills that will increase state education funding by about \$130 million per year, but failed to pass HB 1686, which would have ended unconstitutional excess SWEPT retention and SWEPT avoidance and brought the State in line with the recent decisions in *Rand v. State of New Hampshire*.

“These funding increases are a step in the right direction for the House to be taking,” said Zack Sheehan, NHSFFP Executive Director. “As these bills head to the House Finance Committee, we will continue supporting these funds for students and communities with greater needs and keep pushing the legislature to do more to ensure adequate state funding for every student.”

The votes on HB 1583 (228-150) and HB 1656 (voice vote) send these bills to the House Finance Committee for another round of public testimony and committee consideration. These bills, as amended and approved, add \$35 million to differentiated aid for students receiving special education services, \$39 million in fiscal capacity disparity aid which directs funds to communities with low property values, and \$25 million for districts with high proportions of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, starting next school year. An increase to base adequacy from \$4,100 to \$4,404 per pupil, per year, will start on July 1, 2025. The recent *ConVal* ruling determined that base adequacy must be at least \$7,356.01 per pupil, per year.

HB 1686, the bill that would have required excess SWEPT revenues collected by municipalities to be remitted to the State and banned the use of negative tax rates to offset SWEPT, was placed on the table by a 193-181 vote. Because this was the final day for the House to act on two committee bills, HB 1686 died on the table when the House adjourned.

On February 20, two days before these votes, a NH Superior Court upheld its SWEPT ruling in the *Rand* case, rejecting motions to reconsider the decision or delay its enforcement.

“It’s really disappointing that the legislature let this opportunity to comply with the *Rand* decision pass them by. Excess SWEPT retention and SWEPT avoidance have been found unconstitutional over and over again, and once again earlier this week,” Sheehan said. “The legislature cannot continue to ignore that some tax payers are given special treatment, and that they are enabling an unconstitutional school funding system to persist.”

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The mission of the NHSFFP, a registered 501(c)(3), is to inform the public about the condition of New Hampshire public schools and their funding; to advocate for changes to make the system more equitable for students and taxpayers alike; and, if necessary, to prosecute, manage, control, and/or participate in a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the system for funding education in New Hampshire.