



PRESS RELEASE: Senate Kills Modest School Funding Increase for 2024 Session

May 23— Today, at the New Hampshire Senate voted to refer HB 1583 for interim study, effectively killing it for the remainder of the session. Despite overwhelming public support during the bill’s hearing with the Senate Finance Committee, and passing the House with wide bipartisan support twice, the Senate did not pass this bill’s modest State education funding increases.

“I’m disappointed because this would have been such an easy way for the legislature to show they were doing something to address the State’s school funding issues and would have made a real impact in communities that are struggling the most” said Zack Sheehan, NHSFFP Executive Director. “We don’t need more studies of this issue, we need action. There have been legislative study committees on school funding in 2008, 2018, and 2020, and now we have the careful analysis done by the plaintiffs and Courts in the *ConVal* case. The problem is painfully clear, and this bill would have been a step toward a solution.”

HB 1583 would increase base adequacy from \$4,100 to \$4,404 per pupil and adds \$64 million in targeted aid, divided between fiscal capacity disparity aid, which directs funds to communities with lower property values, and funding for districts with higher proportions of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

The Senate also referred HB 1656 for interim study, a bill which would have increased the State’s funding for special education by \$17.5 million.

Against the backdrop of the two ongoing school funding lawsuits, HB 1583 represented a small step in the right direction, but would have still fallen short of meeting the \$7,356.01 base adequacy floor set in last year’s *ConVal* ruling.

“Just 24 hours ago the Senate voted again to expand the state’s unaccountable voucher program that will divert taxpayer dollars away from public schools. Today, they claim that there’s not enough money to expand funding for the more than 165,000 New Hampshire students attending public schools,” Sheehan said. “Students are missing out on educational opportunities their districts can’t afford, and taxpayers are getting squeezed trying to support education in their communities. New Hampshire can’t afford for the legislature to keep kicking this can down the road.”

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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.