



New Hampshire State Senate **NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release:
February 4, 2011

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HB 77 becomes law just in time for Town Meeting season

Prevents warrant articles from being dramatically changed prior to placement on ballot

(Concord) Calling it a huge win for New Hampshire citizens, state Senator Jack Barnes (R-Raymond) celebrated the passage of HB77 today. With the stroke of his pen, Governor John Lynch made the legislation law just in time for town meeting season. The bill also has the distinction of being the first signed in to law for the new legislative session. Going forward, warrant articles in SB2 towns cannot be dramatically changed prior to being placed on a ballot.

“If there ever was a bill that just could not wait -- it’s HB77,” Barnes said. “I am delighted that the Senate, the House and the governor all gave this legislation the priority and speed it needed to become law. We set a wrong right today, that’s for sure.”

Barnes became concerned last spring during a deliberative session in his hometown after seeing several warrant articles corrupted by amendments from the floor, basically making them unrecognizable from their original form. In other SB2 towns, some articles were changed so dramatically that they only read: “To see.” Barnes filed SB16 to rectify the situation and it was later combined with HB77. “To see a warrant article you’ve worked so hard to get on a ballot be gutted is disheartening to its supporters, not to mention terribly confusing to voters. We absolutely had to make this change,” he added.

Under HB77, voters at deliberative sessions are still allowed to change the dollar amount of an appropriation in a warrant article either up or down, however they may not delete the original subject matter altogether.

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