

# Fracestown Democratic Committee



*“Providing a forum for like minded residents to come together about issues important to them at the local, state, and national levels.”*

Sue Jonas, Chair, 547-3432  
([suejonas@hotmail.com](mailto:suejonas@hotmail.com))

Eric Rasmussen, Vice Chair, 661-2449  
([eric@fracestowndems.org](mailto:eric@fracestowndems.org))

Ted Graham, Secretary, 547-2548  
([graham.ted@gmail.com](mailto:graham.ted@gmail.com))

Jim Bosman, Treasurer, 547-8945  
([jimbosman@me.com](mailto:jimbosman@me.com))

## NH State Representatives

- Jennifer Bernet, D4 - Dem  
([Jennifer.Bernet@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:Jennifer.Bernet@leg.state.nh.us))
- Kermit Williams, D4 - Dem  
([kermit.williams@gmail.com](mailto:kermit.williams@gmail.com))
- Chris Balch, D38 - Dem  
([chris1953balch@gmail.com](mailto:chris1953balch@gmail.com))
- Jim Bosman, D38 - Dem  
([jimbosman@me.com](mailto:jimbosman@me.com))

## NH State Senator

- Ruth Ward, D8 - Rep  
([ruthward@myfairpoint.net](mailto:ruthward@myfairpoint.net))

## Executive Councilor

- Deborah Pignatelli, D5 - Dem  
([debora.Pignatelli@nh.gov](mailto:debora.Pignatelli@nh.gov))

Website: [fracestowndems.org](http://fracestowndems.org)

# FDC QUARTERLY



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Editors: Heidi Dawidoff, Jim Bosman

## ADVANCING THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA

The House has passed a number of bills identified as Democratic priorities. A complete list of bills can be found at the General Court website <http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us>.

- HB 177 - relative to the calculation of education stabilization grants
- HB 551 - relative to establishing a school funding commission
- HB 497 relative to payment by the state a portion of retirement system contributions
- HB 131 - relative to establishing a commission on mental health education programs
- HB 564 - relative to possession of firearms in safe school zones
- HB 712 - relative to a family and medical leave insurance program
- HB 623 - relative to the rates of the business profits and enterprise taxes
- HB 481 - relative to the legalization and regulation of cannabis
- HB 277 - relative to establishing a commission to study a public option for health insurance
- HB 682 - relative to establishing a water resources fund
- HB 696 - relative establishing a protective order for vulnerable adults
- HB 109 - relative to requiring background checks for commercial firearms sales
- HB 514 - relative to a waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearms
- HB 365 - relative to net energy metering limits for customer generators
- HB 186 - relative to establishing a state minimum wage
- HB 455 - relative to repealing the death penalty
- HB 105 - relative to domicile residency, voter registration, and voter verification

## **FROM THE REPS**

### **CHRIS BALCH - NH REP, D38**

One winter during the late 1990's, my father suffered a serious bout with lung cancer that required a protracted stay in a specialized New York City hospital. I visited him several times during his illness, traveling from my home in New Hampshire to Connecticut. There, I would catch a commuter-rail train to New York, and on arriving at Grand Central Station I would take a taxi to the hospital.

I recall that each time my taxi pulled up to the hospital, I would be greeted by the sight of numerous cancer patients (my father NOT among them) standing outside, IV bags draped on rolling stands and shivering in flimsy hospital attire. And all of them smoking cigarettes.

Every time I saw this, I shook my head in disbelief that people could be such slaves to addiction. Despite the fact their addiction was literally killing them, these patients were not able to let it go.

I see a similar situation happening in New Hampshire today.

In October of 2018, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (UN-IPCC) released a report that outlines the consequences of global warming beyond 1.5°C. Ninety-one lead authors and 133 contributing authors from forty countries assessed 30,000 scientific papers in coming to their conclusions.

The UN-IPCC report says our planet will reach a crucial threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels as early as 2030. The report notes that “staying below 1.5°C will require rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society.”

In addition, the U.S. Global Change Research Program, in their 2018, 4<sup>th</sup> National Climate Assessment Report, notes; “While mitigation

and adaptation efforts have expanded substantially in the last four years, they do not yet approach the scale necessary to avoid substantial damages to the economy, environment, and human health over the coming decades.”

Today, I find myself wondering if we, the people of New Hampshire, are so addicted to our habit of fossil fuels that we cannot create change and break free of them. Break free of this addiction as not only our survival, but the very survival of our children, and grandchildren are at risk if we do not.

My father's story has a happy ending. His life was saved by the good decisions and swift actions on the part of his doctors. He endured surgery that cost him most of a lung. His recovery was slow and painful. But he did recover to live many more happy years.

Today, if we are to save our world, we must also make good decisions. And then we must act, and act swiftly.

Chris Balch, Wilton

Science, Technology, Energy Committee

<https://www.facebook.com/ChrisbalchNH/>



### **JIM BOSMAN - NH REP, D38**

After serving three months in the NH State Legislature, I have learned some important lessons. How can 400 individual Representatives act on hundreds of bills? Is there really an opportunity for bipartisan cooperation in the House? Are the voices of citizens heard and fairly represented?

The sheer number of bills considered by both the NH House and Senate seems overwhelming.

I have learned there is a method to the madness. Each session, the majority of bills are clumped together in the “consent agenda” and voted en masse. These have little or no financial impact and are supported by both parties in committee. The rest are brought individually to the House floor. After debate, the committee recommendation is considered by voice, division, or roll call votes. Both division and roll call votes are recorded electronically.

There is most definitely an advantage to be in the majority. I have witnessed many times in committee and on the floor of the House the frustrations exhibited by the Republicans this year. They are not used to being in the minority and at times can slow down the process through parliamentary proceedings. I can’t tell you how many times just prior to voting someone jumps up and shouts “DIVISION” or “ROLL CALL.” Any representative has the right to request a division of the House or, with sufficient seconds, a roll call. The aggravation occurs when a bill has unanimous support in committee or on the floor and someone simply wants to slow down the process. I have learned that bipartisan cooperation only goes so far.

Lastly, testifying on a bill at committee hearings is only one way the public’s voices are heard in Concord. I have learned that voters are not shy about emailing or calling to express their views on issues. I have received hundreds of emails about the death penalty, coyote open hunting season, funding for education, gun safety laws, recreational use of marijuana, and environmental laws. I appreciate each one and only wish I had more opportunities and time to discuss their views in person. I also value the commitment of so many citizens who line the Statehouse entrance and hallways to convey their opinions face-to-face with legislators. It makes a difference.

I have enjoyed my first three months as one of your House representatives. I look forward to considering bills that originated in the Senate, and then encouraging the governor to sign them into law. It’s a long process, but one that I hope

will result in significant changes in people’s lives. There remains much to accomplish.

Jim Bosman, Frankestown  
Fish & Game and Marine Resources Committee



### **JEN BERNET - NH REP, D4**

“Laws, like sausages, cease to inspire respect in proportion as we know how they are made”, is a quote often credited to Otto von Bismarck, but was actually coined by American poet John Godfrey Saxe in the mid nineteenth century. I would say that lawmaking more resembles a relay race. The bill I sponsored, HB 692, which would add a dental benefit to the state Medicaid program, passed the House on a voice vote, without debate. It was recommended “Ought to Pass with Amendment” by the House Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee in a 20-1 vote. The amendment changed the bill by eliminating the current prohibition of Medicaid’s providing such a benefit.

Once a bill is assigned to a committee, the bill ceases to “belong” to the sponsor and becomes the committee’s bill. That is the first relay. Then the committee of the chamber where the bill originated does its work and passes it to the full House with its recommendation: Ought to Pass,

Ought to Pass with Amendment, or Inexpedient to Legislate. If it is the latter, the baton is dropped, but if the bill passes, the House then gives the baton to the Senate, where the Senate committee works on it and may amend it again. The House must agree to the Senate's amendment, if there is one. If the baton keeps getting passed it finally lands in the hands of the Governor, who can sign it into law, allow it to become law without his signature, or veto it.

All along the way, House and Senate members must be educated to the benefits of the bill, which in this case include cost savings. Many Medicaid recipients wind up in emergency rooms due to oral health problems, where they are given antibiotics and pain medication, but the underlying issue isn't treated because there aren't dentists in emergency rooms. So, people are given expensive treatment that only helps the secondary symptoms while the primary problem remains. A filling, or even a root canal would cost less money than that, as well as less pain and suffering. Thirty-seven states have a Medicaid dental benefit. States that had one and took it away to "save money," brought it back because they found they were spending more money without it.

This is a thumbnail of the process. If anyone has any questions about the legislative process or anything else concerning state government, please contact me at 603-831-0947 or at [Jennifer.Bernet@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:Jennifer.Bernet@leg.state.nh.us)

HB 692 has a hearing in the Senate Health and Human Services and Elderly Affairs Committee on Tuesday, April 2. To be continued...

- Jen Bernet

### **COMMUNITY SUPPER - APRIL 4**



Please join us at the Francestown Community Supper being served **April 4<sup>th</sup>** at the Francestown Church, starting at 5:30 p.m.

All donations will benefit the Peterborough Food Pantry and the Francestown Community Church Outreach programs which help feed local families lacking a reliable supply of nutritious food.

***PLEASE BRING A NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEM ANY TIME AFTER 3:00 P.M. AND JOIN US FOR DINNER BEGINNING AT 5:30 P.M. THE MENU INCLUDES SALAD, CHILI, CORN BREAD, AND A VARIETY OF DESSERTS.***

Thank you for your generous support.

### **HIDDEN COSTS OF COLLEGE DEBT**

The price for a public college education is costly in many ways. To burden people who have succeeded through hard work in earning a college degree with thousands of dollars in debt as they go forth as adults is madness and injustice. Through no fault of their own, guilty of neither financial profligacy nor budgetary folly, twenty-year-olds cannot emerge into the sunlight of bright new paths to pursue but are immediately cast into the deep shade of starless wilderness.

The financial cost breeds other costs. The worries that such a debt presses on a young adult are damaging to the spirit just when the graduate has overcome the rocky road of adolescence, completed a college education, and stands ready for a life of some psychological stability, ready to make sensible choices for the future.

A further cost comes in the ways in which students have made course choices while in college. The prospect of a huge debt – the punishment awarded along with the degree – has discouraged students from engaging wholeheartedly, enthusiastically, daringly in the liberal arts education. Why does a liberal arts education matter? Of what practical use can it possibly be to people who need money? Most student who take philosophy courses do not expect to become philosophers or professors of



philosophy. Most students who take Shakespeare courses do not expect to become playwrights, actors, or teachers of English Literature. Most people who take courses in Renaissance History do not expect to become great humanists, great artists, great scientists, great political scientists, or professors of any aspect of the Renaissance. Most people who take basic courses in physics or biology do not expect to pursue a life of smashing atoms or traveling avenues of genetic innovation.

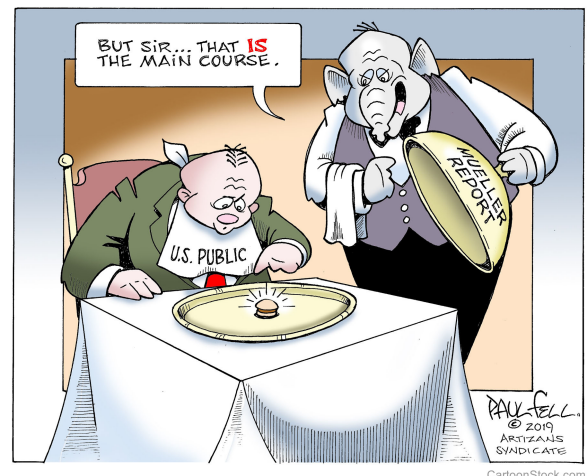
Such courses may not serve a practical purpose, but they are crucial intellectually, spiritually, psychologically, and professionally. Such courses open people up to ideas about human life that great thinkers as well as humble students have struggled with and continue to struggle with; ideas that enrich one's inner life forever. As people move on to work in business, in medicine, in teaching, in the law, they may not, for many decades, find time to read Plato's Republic or Hamlet or The Meaning of Relativity or Origin of the Species or Macciavelli's The Prince. But, having read widely in college, students carry with them a knowledge of what is out there to know, what is out there to keep thinking about, what is out there to embrace and make part of oneself.

There is yet a further cost to the whole society made up of college educated people who have focused too narrowly on college courses that instructed them in how to make money to clear that dreadful debt. They have not acquired the habits of thinking deeply and judging thoughtfully, precisely the habits acquired from meeting and debating the ideas of great minds, precisely the habits so necessary to the nation's business leaders, teachers, doctors, nurses, and lawyers, who will need to think and judge with discernment to serve society's people effectively.

There is no point in ranking the various costs of the great debt incurred by students. All act equally harmfully to thwart a person who needs to breathe free in the intellectual milieu of college and to move confidently into the professional world. The solution to this problem

does not require a revolution or socialism. Capitalism has been rescued from reckless and cruel practices before and can be rescued again. A solution does require a hard look at where the money that is clearly not going to educate students is going. How top-heavy are college administrations? How out-of-line are administrative salaries? Which extra-curricular programs are too costly? Where are economic reductions appropriate, reductions that steer clear of cutting down on faculty or inflating class size? Public education must be affordable. A fair, graded payment scale can be easy to set up. It's been done efficiently in other settings. Students, moreover, ought to be ready to live a basically wholesome, no-frills life at college in order to emerge well-fed academically and, free of debt, ready for a sunny start to making a living.

- Heidi Dawidoff



## BECOME A FDC SUSTAINER

We are grateful to all donors to the Francetown Democratic Committee. Your contributions go far to supporting candidates who, when elected, will work for all of us. We are especially grateful to those who have become sustainers, that is, people who make a regular contribution (the amount is their choice) every month. Do join them. To be a sustainer is a joyful, satisfying act, well worth your generous effort.

Send your donation to:

Francetown Democratic Committee  
243 Journeys End  
Francetown, NH 03043