

LETTER TO CONSTITUENTS FROM CARLA SKINDER:

Dear Constituents,

It has been a very busy few months and I apologize for not being in touch. Happy New Year to all. I cannot believe it is almost the end of February!

Yes, I have had some contentious bills this year and I am going to briefly explain them and for those that would like to discuss them further I welcome your call.

First there was the Horse License bill, which would require horses to be licensed after showing a rabies certificate, horse owners would put money in to a fund for helping to fund a vet in the North Country and they would put in a small fee to the general fund. This bill was at the beginning stages and had many opportunities for changes and amendments which is something that the people that attended the meeting learned with the civics lesson that was given by the chairperson of the committee. Yes, horses do get rabies and they are more at risk in coming in to contact with wild animals than our dogs. No field or barn is free from raccoons, skunks, foxes and bats. There is no such thing as a protected herd of horses unless they have been vaccinated. Just last week two cows in VT were destroyed and found to have rabies. Many shows require proof of a rabies shot. The money aspect was more for a horse welfare fund so that back yard horse owners could be helped in hard times. The shelters across our nation are overflowing with animals that families can no longer afford...some animals have just been put out to fend for themselves. Amendments could have addressed nonprofit organizations, etc. What did happen is an increased awareness of the problems including the dire need of a Vet for the North Country. People felt that it was not their problem yet if you were showing in the area you would want a vet in an emergency. Vets from surrounding areas at times respond to people in the North Country thereby leaving their own area. It was an effort for the horse community to help one another and be protected from a deadly disease. Dogs, cats and ferrets are required by law to be vaccinated for rabies and a tag is not worn by all. I have lived in areas where horses were taxed and in order to ride on certain properties, you paid for a tag that was worn on your bridle. And yes, chickens along with all of the animals found on a farm were taxed up till the 1960's.

The other bill was the Fish and Game commissioners bill. Contrary to what has been said, this was not an anti hunting bill. I have never been against humane, science based hunting. I would ask that you read the NH Fish and Game Audit report that can be found on line and see what the report says. This bill was to include all of the people in NH in the decision making of our wildlife. There are more nonhunters in NH and they need to have a voice. The Fish and Game commissioners just put out a resolution that they need to be more inclusive of nonhunting groups and that is a step in the right direction. Introducing this bill has put in to motion an informal study group to review the audit and work on the problems that have been addressed. This process will include the F&G commissioners and the F&G committee members.

Most bills do not survive but they bring forth ideas that can be worked on without legislation...they bring about an awareness of issues...and they get people to participate in the process. The lack of civility on many bills that we introduce or vote on is unbelievable...now I am being insulted for voting in favor of the seat belt bill. There are no bills with just one view...and yes we tax views too. Imagine what it was like when legislators passed the bill to license dogs? I imagine it took years to get passed...but it did happen.

Cheers, Carla Skinder 542-6065