

**Senator Peter H. Burling
District 5**

I am so pleased to serve you as your State Senator, and I write to report from the New Hampshire Senate on important state issues affecting you, as residents of Plainfield.

Last session, I concentrated on several key issues important to the citizens of New Hampshire: among them were helping New Hampshire's working families by increasing the minimum wage; protecting New Hampshire citizens' health by implementing a smoking ban in restaurants and bars, increasing access to health care by supporting expanded eligibility to health insurance, protecting New Hampshire's special places and open spaces by increasing funding of the Land and Heritage Investment Program, adopting foreclosure protections for consumers, and reducing the high school dropout rate by ensuring attendance to age 18.

Below is a detailed account of the state aid for Plainfield:

FY 2007 State Aid to Plainfield

Type of Aid	Amount
School Building Aid	\$ 27,054
School Lunch	\$ 753
Adequate Education	\$ 1,397,297
Retirement Contribution – Teachers	\$ 29,979
Public Water System Grants	\$ 63,176
Meals & Rooms Distribution	\$ 93,662
Revenue Sharing	\$ 30,039
Retirement Contribution – Police & Fire	\$ 7,377
Highway Block Grant	\$ 102,372
TOTAL	\$ 1,751,709

As a member of Senate Public and Municipal Affairs Committee, Transportation and Interstate Cooperation Committee, and Chairman of both Election Law and Internal Affairs Committee, and the Executive Departments and Administration Committee, I will be very busy. I would be happy to hear from you on any issues of concern you may have. This session, I will continue to concentrate on issues important to the citizens of New Hampshire: costing an adequate education, implementing kindergarten in the communities that don't yet offer it, strengthening our laws to improve internet safety for our children, protecting the future of the New Hampshire Retirement System and revisiting highway funding and our statewide highway infrastructure. I have also been elected chair of the newly formed New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority which is committed to beginning the process of ensuring commuter rail to connect Boston to Nashua to Manchester with the hopes of extending it further.

If you wish to contact me about these or any other matters I might help you with, please call me at (603) 271-2642, or e-mail me at peter.burling@leg.state.nh.us.

**Representative Matthew Houde Sullivan I
Plainfield, Cornish and Grantham**

Before discussing the 2008 legislative session, which is well underway, I wanted to briefly review some highlights from the 2007 session:

Health Care

- Expanded access making it possible for another 10,000 children to enroll in New Hampshire's Children's Health Insurance Program
- Required insurance coverage for children's early intervention therapy sessions

Economy

- First raise in New Hampshire's minimum wage in 10 years
- Research and development tax credit to help attract innovative new businesses
- Renewable Energy Act passed, which will help New Hampshire meet its goal of ensuring we get 25% of our energy from renewable sources by 2025

Environment

- Dedicated funding for the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) - including LCHIP funds that will be going to the Upper Valley Land Trust for preservation of 165 acres in Cornish Education
- Passed a definition of an adequate education, which includes kindergarten

Other

- Eliminated straight ticket voting
- Banned smoking in restaurants and bars
- Passed Civil Unions

So far in 2008, the House has been active addressing bills that were "retained" (or kept over from the 2007 session to be worked on in more detail). One such bill, which recently passed the House, was to limit interest rates on short term lending (such as "payday" lending and "title" lending). As discussed in a previous newsletter, payday lenders provide cash for a short term (such as two weeks) against a borrower's upcoming paycheck. Title lenders lend against the value of borrower's vehicle. New Hampshire does not currently have a cap on interest rates, so these lenders can charge high interest rates (\$15 - 20 per each \$100 borrowed, which can result in interest rates of more than 350% when annualized - annual percentage rate or APR). This type of borrowing can result in a negative debt cycle if, for example, a borrower "rolls-over" a payday loan, only paying back a portion of the amount borrowed previously and creating another loan - with yet more interest. The bill capped the APR at 36% - as the federal government had done for lending to military personnel (at the request of the Department of Defense) since service men and women were finding themselves in financial trouble as a result of such borrowing. The bill now goes to the Senate.

Other topics on the agenda for the 2008 session include determining the cost of an adequate education - as defined in the 2007 session - and creating a responsible plan to fund it. I anticipate having a discussion about Constitutional amendments to allow targeted aid again this session. Other bills of note include a speed limit for boats and the creation of a "Do Not Mail" registry. Additionally, there are several property tax relief bills, including the one that I submitted. As many may recall, a warrant was passed at the Plainfield town meeting last year asking legislative representatives to propose legislation that would enable a town to provide property tax relief. The bill I proposed would allow (though not require) a town to provide relief from the property tax based on income and asset levels of the taxpayer. Currently, towns may provide relief based on income and asset levels, but only for residents over a certain age. This bill would allow relief based on income and assets - regardless of the age of the property tax payer.

I look forward to another productive year at the State House, and as always, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully,

Matthew Houde

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