

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT #9

I am honored to represent the communities of Cornish, Croydon, Grantham, Newport, Plainfield, Springfield, Sunapee, and Unity in my third term as State Representative, Sullivan District 9. I serve as the Clerk for the Education Committee, Assistant Majority Floor Leader and Commissioner for the Connecticut River Valley Flood Control Commission.

This year the House was largely focused on developing a budget for 2020-21. The House priorities were to address the issues surrounding school funding and examine ways to help reduce the burden on local property taxes. The Education Committee heard from many school districts in our state that were in dire financial situations. Bills were passed to help these schools and review school adequacy funding. After many months of negotiations, a compromise to the Governor's veto resulted in the final budget. That budget included targeted revenue sharing for towns, municipalities, and schools who have a higher percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-priced meals. Keno revenues did not meet the funding level for full day kindergarten. As a result, kindergarten costs will now be fully funded from the general fund. Most importantly, an independent commission has been established to study school funding and will deliver a report to the legislature in the 2021 session.

This year laws were enacted for sports betting, hemp farming, establishing municipal energy districts, a much needed expansion of mental health care services and opening coordinated substance abuses services. Towns will now be allowed to make the decision to postpone town meetings in the event of severe weather or other emergencies. From the education committee came two laws that will help students. One that deals with training and policies for all staff for suicide prevention. Suicide is the second leading cause of death in people under the age of 24. The second was inspired by a teenager from Rochester, the Period Poverty Bill became law. This law mandates that all middle and high schools provide essential menstrual products in the female and gender neutral bathrooms. Testimony to our committee revealed that many girls whose families can not afford to buy pads or tampons miss substantial learning time, suffer embarrassment, and low self esteem.

Privatization, accountability, funding and the role of local control of our public school system remain issues of debate in our committee for this next year. In 2021 the legislature will be performing a redistricting of House, Senate, and Executive Council districts. A bill that established an independent commission to give a proposal for new districts based on the recent census passed both the House and Senate but was vetoed by the Governor. I expect to see another bill addressing this issue in this term. Voting rights, marijuana, family leave insurance, and bills addressing gun violence will be a focus in this year of the biennium. We will also see legislation addressing issues around climate change and energy.

Recently, I was honored to receive the Barbara French Advocacy Award from the School Nurses' Association for my work on legislation that reinstates a much needed position of school nurse coordinator at the Department of Education. School nurses play a vital role in the health and well being of our schools, its staff and students.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you in our state government. Please do not hesitate to call or email with your concerns, comments, and advice.

Linda Tanner
NH State Representative Sullivan District 9