

[https://www.unionleader.com/opinion/columnists/kathleen-sullivan-bill-requests-are-preview-the-coming-circus/article\\_db77d6c0-cd01-11ef-8e02-8b7d0d52af00.html](https://www.unionleader.com/opinion/columnists/kathleen-sullivan-bill-requests-are-preview-the-coming-circus/article_db77d6c0-cd01-11ef-8e02-8b7d0d52af00.html)

## Kathleen Sullivan: Bill requests are preview the coming circus

Jan 11, 2025



THE 2025 New Hampshire Legislature is in session! Our 400 representatives and 24 state senators have a busy few months ahead — members of the two bodies have submitted a total of 934 bill requests (“LSRs”) for this session. The text of a few of the bills are available online at the legislative web site, but for the most part the LSRs are placeholders for the actual bills.

It therefore is impossible to know exactly what the bills will say. The list of LSRs provides some hints, however, including the topic and the names of the sponsors. If you see, for example, LSRs involving election laws, sponsored by Ross Berry and/or Joe Sweeney, two former executive directors of the state Republican Party, you know the proposals likely will contain unnecessary restrictions on the right to vote.

Many of the LSRs reference serious policy issues. Some reflect an intent to address the state’s housing shortage, such as permitting residential housing in certain districts not zoned for residential use. Others involve energy and environmental issues. A number also are related to education, education funding and the EFA school voucher program.

There are a number of LSRs relating to the unexpected proliferation of “charitable” gaming casinos throughout the state. Recent changes permitting facilities with machines that look, act and operate like slot machines have disconcerted localities that did not expect and were not prepared for casinos in their communities.

I’m mostly agnostic on the issue, but it will be interesting to see who has more clout with the Legislature and governor: the municipalities that want more controls on the casinos, or the gaming industry’s army of lobbyists and donors.

Taxation will be an issue. LSR 505 provides for a possible increase in revenues from the statewide property tax. While we do not have the bill text yet, this could include an increase in the statewide property tax bill paid by beleaguered residential property owners. The bill’s two sponsors, Joe Sweeney and Republican Majority Leader Jason Osborne, also are sponsoring LSR 504, which would reduce the state’s business enterprise tax.

Homeowners may want to contact their state legislators to ask if they are really considering cutting business taxes again while increasing property taxes.

There will be bipartisan agreement on some bills considered by the Legislature, but significant, heated debate on others. That’s a good thing; substantive debate on serious issues and policy disagreement is what the Legislature should be doing.

Unfortunately, there will be too much time and too many legislative resources wasted on matters that the Legislature either has no control over or are not worthy of consideration.

One proposal beyond the jurisdiction of the state Legislature is LSR 521. It would establish a commission to study the federal government's response to the 1967 attack by Israel on the USS Liberty, an American naval research vessel, during the Six Day War. Thirty-four Americans were killed. Some Americans were not satisfied with Israel's explanation that it was a mistake. No matter your opinion — if you even have one — the New Hampshire Legislature has no authority over a military matter that occurred more than half a century ago.

But some legislators want a say over the federal government. LSR 679 would establish gold and silver as legal tender. HB 102 would give county sheriffs the duty to oversee all federal law enforcement action in their counties. Do the sponsors really think county sheriffs have the training or resources to oversee federal raids on multistate fentanyl drug rings, or international smuggling operations, or terrorist investigations?

The proposals to require voters to request absentee ballots six months in advance, legalize possession of brass knuckles, stop providing menstrual products in public school restrooms, allowing the Legislature to stop the extradition of a fugitive from justice to another state, and whether one superintendent of schools per county is sufficient, are a few of the other proposals that the Legislature should not be taking up. Legislators in both parties should ask themselves if their proposals really deserve the attention of our volunteer representatives who should be focusing on issues having significant impact on the lives of their constituents.

If you want more information on possible or pending legislation, you can visit the General Court website at [www.gencourt.state.nh.us](http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us).

Manchester's Kathy Sullivan is the former chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party.