

Letters

Community's Generosity is Appreciated

Gail and I are in the unique position of being in the center of an amazing distribution process which is especially active during the holiday season. The outpouring of generosity and kindness that funnels through the AE/MS office is absolutely incredible.

Numerous local organizations, families, couples, and individuals contact our office to work through us to donate gifts, meals, gift cards, or monetary gifts to families in need. It is most often delivered anonymously. The donor only wants to see that a family who needs it receives it. Many of these donations are made year after year.

While this generous outpouring is especially abundant at Christmas, it fortunately occurs on a regular basis throughout the year. New backpacks are filled with school supplies, snack funds are established, and multi-course meals are also provided at Thanksgiving and Easter.

It is heartwarming to watch our community come together and take care of those going through a rough time. Gail and I receive such joy each December.

We are especially thankful during the holiday season for our kind and generous community. We truly care for and about one another. This doesn't happen everywhere. We are lucky. Thank you, Andover.

*Gail Parenteau and
Jane Slayton, AE/MS*

School District Meeting and Town Meeting are coming up in March. **Please send a letter to the Beacon** expressing your thoughts on the budgets, the warrant articles, our local election, or other local matters. Our readers want and need to hear your voice!

The mission of *The Andover Beacon* is to serve and strengthen the Andover community. To that end, we welcome civil, reasoned letters addressing specifically local issues, events, and developments. Submissions must not be critical of another's religion; blasphemous; obscene; hateful; legally objectionable; or commercial in nature. The *Beacon* reserves the right to edit or not publish submissions it deems inappropriate for any reason.

GOT NEWS? Mail@AndoverBeacon.com or PO Box 149 or 735-6099



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Mario Ratzki Reports from Concord

Medicaid expansion is once again a topic

By Mario Ratzki, NH representative

The 2014 session of the New Hampshire state legislature was off to a rousing start.

First, the rumors of the death of Medicaid Expansion turned out to be greatly exaggerated. In a transparent attempt to establish a bargaining position with the Senate, the House voted in a partisan vote to reopen the conversation on Medicaid Expansion.

The expansion is necessary to close a gap in coverage for people who make too much for Medicaid and not enough (approximately \$16,000 a year) to qualify for subsidies under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

About the ACA, otherwise known as Obamacare, I would urge everyone to keep an open mind and not let assumptions keep people from applying for health insurance. I know of people who were able to sign up, get a better plan, and lower their premiums and their deductibles by as much as 50%. (Note that these results may not apply to everyone). Donna Toomey, a navigator for the ACA, can answer your questions and help you sign up for a plan at 934-1464, extension 119. This service is completely free.

In other news:

By a vote of 170 to 162 across party lines, HB 492, a bill to legalize and regulate marijuana, passed the House. The first vote to uphold the "Inexpedient to Legislate" (ITL) recommendation of the committee was 170 to 168. A motion to reconsider sailed through, and the vote was then overturned by the same number. A motion for tabling was defeated, and a motion of "Ought to Pass" (OTP) was then passed. The governor has already indicated she will veto the bill.

HB 435, which would increase funding for public charter schools, came in with a recommendation to ITL. This was overturned, and the bill passed 177

to 124.

SB 190 would have terminated the age-old tradition of letting seniors over the age of 65 ski for free at state parks. While the part of the bill which would have stopped free admission for government officials was agreeable to the majority in the House, the bill as written confused the issue and was tabled.

HB 525 raises the age from 17 to 18 years for a juvenile to be considered an adult in the criminal system. This easily passed on a vote of 327 to 17.

HB 675, authorizing the use of license plate scanning devices by law enforcement officials, was roundly defeated on a vote of 250 to 97. The bill was seen by supporters as another tool in law enforcement and was endorsed by police chiefs, but raised concerns among opponents about privacy rights.

Still to come in the coming weeks: GMO labeling, HB 660. This a bill I support on a right to know what is in our foods. We are then free to make our choice. It is coming out of committee on an ITL basis. This would have to be overturned, then voted on as OTP. While I have received phone calls from lobbyists to kill it, an overwhelming majority of e-mails (close to 100%) want labeling. Many other bills to come: Keno, casino, etc.

Danbury voted recently on the issue of the Wild Meadow wind farm project. Danbury selectmen sent out approximately 800 ballots, approximately 400 came back, and by a two-thirds majority the voters decided against the wind farm.

As a resident of Andover, my position has always been that Danbury and Danbury alone should decide. I will support the town's decision. I will therefore vote for HB 580, which would impose a moratorium on wind farms until the state has developed an energy plan.

I am always available at MarioRatzki@gmail.com or 735-5440.

TOWN MATTERS!

The *Beacon* needs volunteers to help with reporting about town news. If you can help, call Charlie at 735-6099

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