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voluntary donation yet, please use the form on page 4 or go to [Andover-Beacon.com](http://Andover-Beacon.com) and "get a round tuit" right away. Thanks!



**Don't wait for a call in the Fall!**  
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## Mario Ratzki Reports from Concord: February 2015

Legislature hard at work, despite snow cancellations

Mario Ratzki, NH Representative

The House has settled after the dramatic upheaval of a few weeks ago when Shawn Jasper became Speaker instead of Bill O'Brien.

While there are still some lingering bad feelings among the two Republican factions, committee chairs and vice chairs appointed by Speaker Jasper have been busy scheduling hearings, and a sense of normalcy seems to have been restored.

The continuous snowstorms have delayed our work, with almost weekly cancellations. Deadlines to vote on House bills are fast approaching, and two-day sessions might be the norm until March 19 to make up for lost time. Budget bills have until March 26 to be acted on.

Some highlights of our work so far:

HB 102: A Town Meeting cannot be adjourned without all warrant articles having been voted on. Passed by a voice vote.

HB 134: Establish a committee to study the use of motorized scooter chairs on roadways and sidewalks. Passed by a voice vote.

HB 115: Require the State to abide by the 26% cap that the Department of Safety gets from the Highway Fund. The amount had grown to almost 32%. Our constitution requires that the Department of Safety receive a portion of the Highway Fund for "the supervision of traffic." Passed by a voice vote.

HB 164: Requiring Health and Human Services to begin processing applications for the therapeutic use of marijuana by July 25. Killed by a voice vote.

HB 219: The use (or misuse) of electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards. A bill to enhance rule compliance for EBT card holders, such as no alcohol or tobacco purchases. Passed by a voice vote.

HB 338: Have the state legislature nominate candidates for the US Senate. Killed by a voice vote.

HB 657: Authorize up to 300 slot

machines at each location where charitable gaming takes place. Killed on a voice vote.

HB 176: A bill proposed by yours truly to reimburse 18 towns for flood control payments for 2013. Defeated by a vote of 221 to 127. But my co-sponsors and I were able to extract a very public promise from Finance vice chair Lynn Ober that the towns would be made whole when a new settlement check from Massachusetts for \$658,000 had been received.

HB 194: Providing that life begins at conception. Defeated by a bi-partisan vote of 246 to 104.

HB 371: Assessing the consequences of the Citizens United decision in which the Supreme Court decided that corporations have the same free speech rights as people do when it comes to political campaigns and campaign financing. Defeated on a partisan vote of 194 to 157.

HB 147: Increasing the homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$120,000. Approved by voice vote.

### The Governor's Budget

Governor Hassan unveiled her budget in front of a joint session of the House and the Senate. While it has been well covered by the news media, a couple of items should be mentioned.

It includes a 21¢ increase in the cigarette tax, which I will support because it increases money for education, but I fear it has no chance of passing either in the House or the Senate. The governor's budget also includes a proposal to allow video slots in restaurants and bars, which I will oppose; I believe it will also be hard to pass.

On a local note, I was told by Gracia Snyder of Salisbury and formerly of Andover that the Green Crow Bridge should in fact be called the White Bridge, after a nearby farm. My apologies.

I encourage anyone who would like to attend House sessions to do so. The sessions are open to the public and are a perfect example of our democracy in action.

I am always available at 735-5440 or at [MarioRatzki@gmail.com](mailto:MarioRatzki@gmail.com).



# Letters

## Thanks to Andover Fire Department

We would like to thank the Andover Fire Department for assistance on the night of January 31. Responding quickly to our needs were Peter Smith, Jacob Johnson, Chief Rene Lefebvre, Ben Seaver, and Scott Davis.

Most sincerely,

*Ed and Doreen Barkowski*

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.

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