



BUSINESS & INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
New Hampshire's Statewide
Chamber of Commerce

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Christopher Sununu
Governor of New Hampshire
107 N. Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Sununu:

As leaders of chambers of commerce and statewide trade associations, we are writing to urge you to veto two bills passed by the legislature this year. If these bills become law, they will negatively impact our members and will slow New Hampshire's economic recovery.

HB 712

This bill establishes a mandatory paid family leave program. Although the legislation allows companies to pass on the cost of this new benefit to their employees if they choose, it does not allow them to "opt out" of the program. We believe that employers are best equipped to make decisions about employee benefit programs that allows them to attract and retain individuals best suited for their enterprises, not state government. Please veto this bill.

HB 1166

This bill makes permanent COVID-19 related reasons that qualify an individual to receive unemployment benefits that are set to expire at the end of the year. It extends unemployment eligibility to those who are afraid they would contract COVID-19 if they returned to work, even if their employer had complied with all federal and state workplace health and safety guidelines. It also requires employers of 15 or more people to provide a family medical leave benefit for COVID-19 related reasons and allows those individuals to collect unemployment while away from work on family medical leave. We believe this provision is little more than a backdoor means to provide *mandatory* employer paid family leave, which we oppose. Most significantly, this legislation will quickly deplete New Hampshire's unemployment trust fund resulting in higher unemployment insurance taxes for employers. We ask that you veto this bill as well.

As noted, these bills add unnecessary costs to enterprises of all shapes and sizes at a time when policy makers should be working to remove barriers to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. They will further incumber employers, large and small, with unnecessary and ill-timed, additional costs.

Trade Associations/Chambers of Commerce Veto Request

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Thank you, Governor Sununu, for considering our requests.

Respectfully,

Jim Roche
President, Business & Industry Association

Pete McNamara
President, NH Auto Dealers Association

Mike Somers
President & CEO, NH Lodging & Restaurant Assoc.

Robert J. Sculley
President, NH Motor Transport Association

Jessyca Keeler
President, Ski New Hampshire

John Dumais
President & CEO, NH Grocers Association

Gary Abbott
Exec. Vice President, Associated Contractors of NH

Joan Pageau
Interim President, NH Assoc. of Insurance Agents

Joshua Reap
President, Associate Builders & Contractors
NH/VT Chapter

Wendy Hunt
President & CEO, Greater Merrimack/Souhegan
Chamber of Commerce

John Nyhan
President, Hampton Area Chamber of Commerce

Donna Morris
President, Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce

Ashley Haseltine
President, Greater Derry/Londonderry Chamber
Of Commerce

Janice Crawford
Executive Director, Mt. Washington Valley
Chamber of Commerce

Laura Ring
President & CEO, Greater Rochester Chamber
of Commerce

Kyle Knapton
Board President, Greater Hillsborough Chamber
of Commerce

Brenda Collins
Executive Director, Greater Hudson Chamber
Of Commerce

Kathleen Driscoll
Executive Director, Jackson Area Chamber
of Commerce

Virginia Leiby
Lead Office Volunteer Coordinator
Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

Kate Luczko
President & CEO, Greater Nashua Chamber
of Commerce