New Hampshire's New Budget: Wealthy Win, Public Services Slashed

Explore New Hampshire's $15.9 billion budget passed by Republicans, impacting services, school vouchers, and housing needs.

Hampton, New Hampshire, USA - On June 26, 2025, the New Hampshire House and Senate Republicans passed a substantial $15.9 billion budget for the next two years, swiftly signed into law by Governor Ayotte. This budget casts a long shadow over many Granite State families, as it significantly raises costs for low-income individuals to provide tax breaks for wealthier citizens and out-of-state corporations. The implications of these decisions are felt across the state, touching on critical services that residents rely on, including health care, housing, and child protection.

It¿s worth noting that this budget comprises three main bills: HB 1, which deals with the financial figures; HB 2, which outlines

policy changes; and HB 282, which includes last-minute adjustments for police and firefighter retirement benefits as well as funding for the Manchester School District. The votes for these bills reflect a stark division ج for instance, HB 1 squeaked by with a 185-180 vote, showcasing an ardent split in party lines, with 185 Republicans supporting it while opposition came from 18 Republicans and 161 Democrats. Similarly, HB 2 and HB 282 saw Republicans largely in favor while Democrats raised their voices against the spending plan.

Education Under Scrutiny

Education funding is a particularly hot topic as the budget includes a massive $35 million cut (20%) to the University System of New Hampshire, bringing the total funding to $164 million ج the second highest in-state tuition in the nation. New Hampshire students now face a staggering in-state tuition figure of $17,019, while out-of-state students are asked to pay $33,850.

In line with these developments, New Hampshire¸s school voucher program is undergoing notable changes, including an increase in funding by $27 million, or 45%, totaling $87.3 million. The big news? The income eligibility cap for this program is being eliminated, allowing participation regardless of household income. Notably, 64% of those using vouchers previously came from homeschooling or private school backgrounds, with a striking 90% of the program¸s funds funneled to religiously affiliated schools ج a concerning diversion from public education funds, as emphasized by many education advocates.

Granite State Progress reported that on February 8, 2024, the House faced a heated debate over measures aimed at expanding school privatization. Two bills, HB 1561 and HB 1634, aimed for sweeping changes in eligibility but were defeated in tight votes, showing strong public opposition. Out of 970 voices in opposition to HB 1561, only 48 supported it.

Funding Concerns

The implications of these educational policies are profound. As the budget diversions for school vouchers continue, projections indicate that upwards of $24 million could potentially be redirected from public schools for the 2023-2024 school year, a figure that far exceeds prior budget estimates. With the universal school vouchers projected to cost over $105 million annually, the financial burden on New Hampshire taxpayers is bound to increase.

In contrast, data reveal that the majority of voucher recipients (77%) were already enrolled in private institutions or were homeschooled, raising questions over the effectiveness of these programs. As stated in another report from Reaching Higher NH, the state could face a staggering outflow of about $102 million annually if all private and homeschooled students opted for school vouchers.

And while all these discussions about education funds unfold, New Hampshire grapples with pressing housing needs as well. With nearly 90,000 housing units required by 2040 and the average home price teetering at $513,000, the newly passed budget sadly includes no fresh investments in housing development programs. Coupled with rising energy costs driven by reliance on natural gas – 35% higher than the national average – the budget leaves many New Hampshire residents anxious about the future.

As the voters of New Hampshire navigate these changes, one can't help but wonder: What's next for education and essential services in the state? The debates surrounding school funding, tuition hikes, and economic disparities are only beginning, shedding light on deeply rooted issues that demand thoughtful consideration and action.

Details	
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Quellen	• www.seacoastonline.com • granitestateprogress.org • www.reachinghighernh.org

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