

REBECCA PERKINS **KWOKA** **STATE SENATE**

Hi,

As February progresses, we are right in the thick of an important slate of legislation that will shape our elections for the next decade. Wednesday, the Senate took up the GOP's gerrymandered maps for state Representatives and Senate, ultimately voting to reject the total of 4 amendments we have offered to the maps and pass them, along party lines. This came after I presented our petition, signed by 530 Granite Staters, calling for a more fair and transparent process — the same demands that we heard from folks throughout the fall. It goes to show that these public input sessions were little more than show.

These maps will have grave consequences—ones that could affect our elections for the next decade. For a state that prides itself on its democracy, we cannot allow this partisan power to go unchecked. There is still time to sign the petition for fair maps, linked [here](#), that calls on the Governor to veto any gerrymandered maps. The petition also urged the Redistricting and Election Laws and Municipal Affairs committees to hold additional public, transparent hearings to ensure all Granite Staters have the opportunity to participate, which is why I presented it in early February before the vote.

Gerrymandered maps relate directly to working hard to protect many of the rights we hold dear. Just last week, my

Access to Abortion-Care bill was tabled on a 12-12 vote. I will keep working hard to get that extra vote we need to protect our reproductive rights for good, especially crucial as Roe v. Wade's fate hangs precariously in the balance. And as we slowly move toward election season, we must be vocal in demanding candidates that will defend women and pregnant folks.

This session has, thankfully, had some good news as well! Several of the bills I am leading passed out of the Senate or Committee with unanimous bipartisan support! These bills include:

- **Expanded Eviction Support**, which would extend eviction notices to 60 days. This change would provide both families and landlords with a bit more breathing room as they work to resolve the situation. On to the House!
- **Commission to Study Landlord-Tenant Mediation**, as mediation has been able to keep 80% of the tenants in the program in their homes. With the current housing vacancy rate in New Hampshire at less than 1%, any effort to keep people in their homes is a huge success and this commission will help find ways to expand the impact of this innovative approach.
- **Funding to Widen the Turning Basin**, which will be key aid to modernizing our turning basin and allowing our working port to serve modern, larger ships - continuing its economic support for our region.
- **Commission to Study Barriers to Housing Development**, helping to identify solutions to building more workforce and middle-income housing—which in turn will help attract young people and create a more diverse workforce for small businesses.
- **"Pillow Tax"**: though this enabling legislation for a \$2 fee failed in Committee, we were able to attach a study commission on it to another bill - keeping hope alive for now! That is farther in the process than this bill has ever made it.
- **Short-Term Rentals**: Unfortunately this bill passed the Senate Wednesday, which would prohibit municipalities from banning single-family or two-family structures as

short-term rentals. As it moves through the House, I hope to continue working to find ways to improve this bill's balance of long-term housing supply and local control.

News & Events

I sent a letter to the Governor's Office of Emergency Relief and Recovery, urging it to establish an emergency fund to provide partial replacement income for both restaurant and retail workers, and businesses. I have heard many distressed, pressing messages from constituents working in retail and restaurants, who either contracted COVID themselves or are navigating a shortage in workers. These workers do not qualify for unemployment, as they remain employed, and yet they are missing days to earn their income in the interest of keeping us all safe - a constituent I spoke with missed 12 days of work for 3 separate incidents in one month! Keeping people in their homes and able to care for their families is critical to maintaining our economy during this pandemic. There are also businesses who are so disappointed to be in the position of needing help, again - but business has dropped off sharply as Omicron hit and November progressed. When I heard from these constituents, I wanted to do something to help, and GOFFER did not have any programs open. So I asked them to create a program that would meet the needs of these constituents, and have also joined efforts to replenish the Restaurant Relief Fund. Establishing or replenishing these funds could help ease these burdens as we work together to get cases under control.

"The Future of Calling Portsmouth Home": On Tuesday, I joined a great panel to discuss the need for quality, affordable housing on the Seacoast. Addressing our housing crisis opens up new opportunities for our towns and businesses, creating a more diverse and vibrant community. I'm leading legislation like the Housing Toolkit Bill (SB 400) that will incentivize low-income and workforce housing development.

State of the State: Yesterday I attended the State of the

State in a rare joint session of the House and Senate. As part of the address, the Governor announced a new, \$100M fund for housing - \$60M for assisting with financing, \$30M related to permitting, \$5M for demolition and \$5M for planning and zoning. This is an idea Housing Action NH has been working on as well and I am glad to see the support for such an important issue - and look forward to further details. It was good to get together and see some of House colleagues!



Lastly, I want to take a moment and thank you for being a part of this important work with me. Advocating from the Minority can be tough, detailed work, but I find inspiration from each petition signature and thoughtful email that I receive from each of you. Building a more equitable future will always take time - and I wouldn't want to push forward with any other community.







Logan and Colby say hi - they are growing so fast, and we all suit up and head to work and school during the week! Colby just had a tiny surgery on her lip at York Hospital, where she received wonderful treatment!

Take Care,

Rebecca

[603-793-1076](tel:603-793-1076)

voterebeccanh@gmail.com

If you believe in the work I'm doing, please support my campaign with a donation.

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$250

\$500

Other

[HOME](#)

[LEGISLATION](#)

[NEWSLETTER](#)

[DONATE](#)

PAID FOR BY REBECCA PERKINS KWOKA FOR STATE SENATE

P.O. Box 1256, Portsmouth, NH 03801-1256

Bernice Brody, Treasurer

3 Hillside Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801

