

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**February 3, 2022**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**REPORT OF COMMITTEE**

**The Committee on Judiciary to which was referred HB  
1195,**

**AN ACT relative to public comment periods at public  
meetings. Having considered the same, report the same  
with the following amendment, and the  
recommendation that the bill OUGHT TO PASS WITH  
AMENDMENT.**

**Rep. Edward Gordon**

**FOR THE COMMITTEE**

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee:	<b>Judiciary</b>
Bill Number:	<b>HB 1195</b>
Title:	<b>relative to public comment periods at public meetings.</b>
Date:	<b>February 3, 2022</b>
Consent Calendar:	<b>CONSENT</b>
Recommendation:	<b>OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT 2022-0455h</b>

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

This bill, as amended, provides that there must be a public comment period at the beginning of each public meeting of a school board or school administrative unit (SAU) board. The public comment period would be held before any substantive business is conducted. Individual comment could be limited to three minutes and the comment period need be no longer than one hour. The period would need to be no longer than necessary to hear all those who wish to speak. This would not limit a board from receiving public comments during other times during a meeting. The original bill required all public bodies to have a fixed public comment period. The amendment provides only for school boards and SAU boards as that is where the testimony heard by the committee indicated that a problem exists.

Vote 21-0.

Rep. Edward Gordon  
FOR THE COMMITTEE

Original: House Clerk  
Cc: Committee Bill File

## CONSENT CALENDAR

Judiciary

**HB 1195**, relative to public comment periods at public meetings. **OUGHT TO PASS WITH AMENDMENT.**

Rep. Edward Gordon for Judiciary. This bill, as amended, provides that there must be a public comment period at the beginning of each public meeting of a school board or school administrative unit (SAU) board. The public comment period would be held before any substantive business is conducted. Individual comment could be limited to three minutes and the comment period need be no longer than one hour. The period would need to be no longer than necessary to hear all those who wish to speak. This would not limit a board from receiving public comments during other times during a meeting. The original bill required all public bodies to have a fixed public comment period. The amendment provides only for school boards and SAU boards as that is where the testimony heard by the committee indicated that a problem exists. **Vote 21-0.**

Original: House Clerk  
Cc: Committee Bill File

Amendment to HB 1195

1 Amend the title of the bill by replacing it with the following:

2

3 AN ACT relative to public comment periods at school board or school administrative unit  
4 public meetings.

5

6 Amend the bill by replacing all after the enacting clause with the following:

7

8 1 New Paragraph; Access to Governmental Records and Meetings; Meeting Open to the Public;  
9 Public Comment. Amend RSA 91-A:2 by inserting after paragraph III the following new paragraph:

10 IV. All meetings of a school board or school administrative unit board open to the public  
11 under this chapter shall include an opportunity for public comment after the meeting has been  
12 opened and prior to the board addressing any substantive agenda issues. Individual public comment  
13 time may be limited but not to less than 3 minutes per person. The meeting can proceed into  
14 substantive issues once all public participants have been given the opportunity to speak, provided  
15 however that the total time to hear all members of the public may be limited, but not to less than  
16 one hour. The content of the public comment shall not be limited except for purposes of maintaining  
17 decorum. Nothing shall prevent a school board or school administrative unit board from having  
18 additional public comment at other times during the meeting.

19 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.

**Amendment to HB 1195**  
**- Page 2 -**

2022-0455h

AMENDED ANALYSIS

This bill requires that all open meetings of school boards or school administrative unit boards have a period designated for public comment.





2021 SESSION

Judiciary

Bill #: HB 1195 Motion: OTPA AM #: 0455h Exec Session Date: 2-3-22

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Gordon, Edward M. Chairman	✓		
McLean, Mark Vice Chairman	✓		
Sylvia, Michael J.	✓		
Wuelper, Kurt F. Clerk	✓		
Alexander, Joe H.	✓		
<del>Rice, Kimberly A.</del> EDWARDS	✓		
<del>Silber, Norman J.</del> MERNER	✓		
Greene, Bob J.	✓		
Kelley, Diane E.	✓		
Tausch, Lindsay ANDRUS	✓		
Trottier, Douglas R.	✓		
Smith, Marjorie K.	✓		
Berch, Paul S. WOODS	✓		
Horrigan, Timothy O.	✓		
DiLorenzo, Charlotte I.	✓		
Chase, Wendy	✓		
Kenney, Cam E.	✓		
Langley, Diane M.	✓		
McBeath, Rebecca Susan	✓		
Paige, Mark	✓		
Simpson, Alexis	✓		

*Kurt Wuelper*

21 0



*HB 1195* 2021 SESSION

Judiciary

Bill #: \_\_\_\_\_ Motion: 0455h AM #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exec Session Date: 2-3-22

<u>Members</u>	<u>YEAS</u>	<u>Nays</u>	<u>NV</u>
Gordon, Edward M. Chairman	✓		
McLean, Mark Vice Chairman	✓		
Sylvia, Michael J.	✓		
Wuelper, Kurt F. Clerk	✓		
Alexander, Joe H.	✓		
<del>Rice, Kimberly A.</del> <i>EDWARDS</i>	✓		
<del>Silber, Norman J.</del> <i>MERNER</i>	✓		
Greene, Bob J.	✓		
Kelley, Diane E.	✓		
Tausch, Lindsay <i>ANDRUS</i>	✓		
Trottier, Douglas R.	✓		
Smith, Marjorie K.	✓		
Berch, Paul S. <i>WOODS</i>	✓		
Horrigan, Timothy O.	✓		
DiLorenzo, Charlotte I.	✓		
Chase, Wendy	✓		
Kenney, Cam E.	✓		
Langley, Diane M.	✓		
McBeath, Rebecca Susan	✓		
Paige, Mark	✓		
Simpson, Alexis	✓		

*Kurt Wuelper*

21 0



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

PUBLIC HEARING ON HB 1195

**BILL TITLE:** relative to public comment periods at public meetings.

**DATE:** 1-20-22

**LOB ROOM:** 206/8

**Time Public Hearing Called to Order:** 3:40 PM

**Time Adjourned:**

**Committee Members:** Reps. Gordon, McLean, Wuelper, Sylvia, Alexander Jr., Notter, Merner, Greene, D. Kelley, Andrus, Trottier, M. Smith, Borch, Horrigan, DiLorenzo, Chase, Kenney, Langley, McBeath, Paige and Simpson

**Bill Sponsors:**

Rep. Dolan, Rock. 5; Rep. Ankarberg, Straf. 10; Rep. Thomas, Rock. 5; Rep. Maggiore, Rock. 22; Rep. Cordelli, Carr. 4; Rep. Potucek, Rock. 6; Rep. Deshaies, Carr. 6; Rep. Baldasaro, Rock. 5; Rep. Pauer, Hills. 26

TESTIMONY

\* Use asterisk if written testimony and/or amendments are submitted.

**Rep Baldasaro sponsor Support**

For the last 5 or 6 years the school board has been denying any real opportunity for public comment, by taking public comment only at the end of the meeting. Sometimes that means they will have passed the item about which you wanted to speak. I hear this is happening around our state. Parents and all citizens have the right to speak before agenda items are dealt with. I went to the school board and told them we would do just what we are doing here.

**Q Gordon:** Should the period you desire be limited to Agenda items or wide open??

**Ans:** the door should be wide open. **Q Langley:** did the board give a reason for what they are doing?

**Ans:** They said this was not a meeting for the public.; it was for the board to do the people's business.

**Q DiLorenzo:** How would putting the comment period at the beginning affect the agenda:

**Ans:** Why would people show up then? At the end is too late. It's a form of government control.

**Q Simpson:** At times we allow public comment just prior to the relevant agenda item. Is that flexibility for that?

**Ans:** I like that, so maybe that could be included. I hate to see every item held up for public comment though.

**He reads Rep Dolan's letter.**

**Barrett Christina NHSBA Opposed**

We are not opposed to public comment and our boards allow for that. The definition section needs help. All committees in this House hold hearings vice meetings. If this bill passes, each hearing will have to be preceded by a public comment period. The State Board of Education hasn't taken public comment in about a year.

**Q Notter:** The bill is about the start of the school board? The language of the bill applies it to all public bodies, as defined in RSA 91-A.

**Q Gordon:** Town meeting includes the election of officers. Comment period before?

**Ans:** The election is kind of a public meeting, kind of not. You may have to allow a public comment period, about anything, first.

**Natch Greyes NHMA    Opposed**

There are no exceptions included in the bill. Every board, even those where no one normally attends, would have to hold the first 15 minutes for public comment. Town meeting would be the same. Non-public sessions might be in that position as well.

**Laurie Ortolano    RTKNH    Support**

We propose the bill be amended as in my written testimony. I will send the Nashua public comment policy we adopted from Nashua. The idea boards would have to wait for comment when no one is in attendance has been addressed by the courts in other contexts and they have said that is similar to a private meeting. Boards have been found to be justified of going into non-public session without stating the specific reason if no one was here. We are seeing a lot of interest in making the public voice louder at all kinds of meetings. It could be put on the agenda and everyone would know but few would avail the opportunity. Q Gordon: Have you thought about limiting it to school boards? Ans: If that would get the bill through, I guess it would be better than nothing, but it also applies in other contexts.



Rep Kurt Wuelper



# House Remote Testify

## Judiciary Committee Testify List for Bill HB1195 on 2022-01-20

Support: 9 Oppose: 81 Neutral: 0 Total to Testify: 0

Export to Excel

<u>Name</u>	<u>City, State</u> <u>Email Address</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Testifying</u>	<u>Non-Germane</u>	<u>Signed Up</u>
Kudlik, Cindy	Grafton, NH CindyKudlik@protonmail.com	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	No	1/14/2022 4:34 PM
Codling, Brigitte	North Haverhill, NH townmanager@haverhill-nh.com	A Member of the Public	Town of Haverhill	Oppose	No	No	1/14/2022 8:55 PM
Boucher, Jennifer	Monroe, NH jllcollins75@gmail.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	No	1/14/2022 9:06 PM
Hamer, Gary	Manchester, NH ghamer@mansd.org	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	No	1/16/2022 1:41 PM
Potucek, John	Derry, NH potucek1@comcast.net	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	No	1/17/2022 1:52 PM
Goggans, Ron	Campton, NH rongoggans@gmail.com	An Elected Official	Myself	Oppose	No	No	1/18/2022 10:37 AM
Saba, Robin	CANDIA, NH rbrooks230@hotmail.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/18/2022 2:47 PM
Greyes, Natch	Concord, NH ngreyes@nhmunicipal.org	A Lobbyist	New Hampshire Municipal Association	Oppose	No	No	1/18/2022 4:22 PM
Smith, Julie	Nashua, NH cantdog@comcast.net	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 8:01 AM
Tremblay, RMAC Chair, Michele L.	Penacook, NH mlt@naturesource.net	A Member of the Public	Rivers Management Advisory Committee	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 10:42 AM
Dolan, Tom	Londonderry, NH tomd0610@gmail.com	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 12:01 PM
Richardson, Daniel	Nashua, NH daniel6_22@comcast.net	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 1:42 PM
Davis, Michelle	Concord, NH mdavis@nhlakes.org	A Lobbyist	NH LAKES	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 2:57 PM

Pumilia, MaryAnn	Laconia, NH mpumilia@frontiernet.net	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 6:58 PM
Levavi, David	Manchester, NH david.levavi@protonmail.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 7:01 PM
Anastasia, Patricia	Londonderry, NH patti.anastasia@gmail.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose	No	No	1/19/2022 9:27 PM
Pauer, Eric	Brookline, NH secretary@BrooklineGOP.org	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/19/2022 10:05 PM
Loveless, Eric	bedford, NH nassur34@protonmail.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/20/2022 12:31 AM
Walczyk, Alexander	Hooksett, NH awalczyk@comcast.net	An Elected Official	Myself	Support	No	No	1/20/2022 12:43 PM
Petrusewicz, Carol	Rochester, NH clmcc2befree@yahoo.com	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support	No	No	1/20/2022 7:15 PM

HB1195 Testimony

**From:** Diane Pauer <[Diane.Pauer@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:Diane.Pauer@leg.state.nh.us)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2022 6:03 AM

**To:** ~House Judiciary Committee <[HouseJudiciaryCommittee@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:HouseJudiciaryCommittee@leg.state.nh.us)>

**Subject:** HB 1195 relative to public comment periods at public meetings

Dear Honorable House Judiciary Committee Members:

I am writing to you as a cosponsor of **HB 1195** *relative to public comment periods at public meetings*. A public comment period at a public meeting is essential as it provides the opportunity for members of the public body to hear *directly* from the people who they govern and who are also affected by the decisions made by the public body. The opportunity for public input should unquestionably be placed at the beginning of a public meeting. This allows for the public to weigh in on topics on the agenda noticed for the present meeting before these items are discussed by the public body. Importantly, by placing a public input period at the beginning rather than at the end of a meeting, the public body may obtain relevant and important information from the public that serves to inform the public body regarding agenda items for which they may be acting upon, voting, during the course of the meeting. For this reason, waiting until the end of the meeting to allow for public input particularly on agenda items is unsound as well as counterproductive.

Public input placed at the end of a meeting, as some may suggest as preferable, would be most purposeful in allowing the public to comment upon topics *not* address at the present meeting and subsequently enable the public body to place such topics on a *future* meeting agenda.

Finally, while I understand that a public meeting is a business meeting, a balance must be achieved in order to both ensure and uphold the right of the people being governed to be heard at a public meeting. As a former Budget Committee member and chair, I understand this tradeoff firsthand; and that is why our state needs HB 1195. Public input governed by social norms at a public meeting should never be thwarted nor suppressed. The opportunity for public input at a public meeting is essential. In closing, HB 1195 serves to protect the voice of the people at public meetings in New Hampshire.

Therefore, I urge the committee to vote **OTP** on **HB 1195**.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,


**Rep. Diane Pauer**

New Hampshire General Court - House of Representatives

Hillsborough County District 26 - Brookline/Mason

Municipal & County Government Committee Member & Committee Whip

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**Archived:** Tuesday, March 15, 2022 11:50:25 AM  
**From:** Barrett Christina  
**Sent:** Monday, January 31, 2022 12:02:05 PM  
**To:** ~House Judiciary Committee  
**Cc:** Jennifer Foor; Karen Karwocki; Rebecca Wilson  
**Subject:** HB 1195  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Attachments:**  
[Supt Survey Results - Public comments.xls](#) 

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Dear Members of the Committee –

Please allow this email to serve as a follow up to my testimony a couple weeks ago regarding HB 1195. As a result of the discussion of this bill, NHSBA surveyed school superintendents asking if their local school board(s) provided an opportunity for public comments at each meeting. Attached in an Excel are the results of that survey.

While the survey is not comprehensive and not every school board replied, it does indicate that most school boards already offer a public comment period at public meetings. Some boards offer more than one or multiple public periods at meetings.

To reiterate, NHSBA believes this bill is unnecessary, at least as it pertains to school boards.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please contact me if NHSBA can assist.

---



**Barrett M. Christina**

Executive Director

**NH School Boards Association**

P: (603) 228-2061 x307 F: (603) 228-2351

A: 25 Triangle Park Drive, Suite 101, Concord, NH 03301

W: [nhsba.org](http://nhsba.org) E: [bchristina@nhsba.org](mailto:bchristina@nhsba.org)



**Disclaimer:**

The information in this electronic message, including any attachment(s), may include confidential or privileged information, a draft, or legal guidance which is intended for the exclusive use of the intended recipient. NHSBA provides legal education and information as a general service to NHSBA members. The information provided to members does not alone establish an attorney client relationship. Additionally, the information provided should not be interpreted or used as a substitute for a legal opinion from a school attorney. Before making legal decisions, school boards and administrators should consult with their attorney or other qualified counsel. If you are not the intended recipient and have received this message in error, do not use or rely on this information. Please notify the New Hampshire School Boards Association by reply e-mail or by telephone at (603) 228-2061. Please destroy all copies of this message and any attachments thereto.

**Archived:** Wednesday, March 16, 2022 10:39:07 AM  
**From:** [Liz Tentarelli](#)  
**Sent:** Friday, January 14, 2022 3:15:01 PM  
**To:** [~House Judiciary Committee](#)  
**Subject:** HB1195 is inappropriate to all municipal committees  
**Importance:** Normal

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To the House Judiciary Committee:

I urge you to recommend ITL on **HB1195** requiring 15 minutes at the start of all public meetings to be set aside for public testimony. In a much earlier life I chaired the Atkinson Recreation Commission. More recently I served for 12 years on the Newbury Public Library board of Trustees, 8 of those years as chair. We rarely had anyone besides the board and library director, and when we did they were allowed to testify at the beginning or right after our discussion of a change to policy or at the end to comment on the budget. Reserving time at the beginning of a meeting would make no sense if the public comment were intended to apply to a decision or discussion we had not yet had.

I respect the intent of the bill, but I ask you to please respect that elected and appointed officials on NH's many local boards and committees should be the ones to decide when in a meeting it makes the most sense to allow public comment.

I respectfully submit this testimony on HB1195 for your hearing on Jan. 20, 3:30 pm.

Liz Tentarelli

27 Bowles Rd., Newbury NH 03255



Voting Members:

**Michele L. Tremblay**  
Chair  
Conservation  
Community

**Larry T. Spencer**  
Vice Chair  
Conservation  
Commissions

**Victoria Bunker**  
Historic/Archeological  
Interests

**Christopher Hodgdon**  
NH Fish & Game  
Commission

**Frederick J. McNeill**  
Municipal Officer

**Madeleine Mineau**  
Granite State  
Hydropower  
Association

**Robert M. Roseen**  
Recreational Interests

**Ruth Ward**  
Local River Management  
Advisory Committees

**Donald L. Ware**  
Public Water Suppliers

**Vacant**  
Agricultural Community

**Vacant**  
Business & Industry  
Association

Non-Voting Members:

**Peter Bowman**  
NH Department of  
Natural and Cultural  
Resources

**Brian Eaton**  
NH Department of  
Safety

**Jennifer Gilbert**  
NH Office of  
Strategic Initiatives

**Mark Hemmerlein**  
NH Department of  
Transportation

**Shawn Jasper**  
NH Department of  
Agriculture,  
Markets & Food

**John Magee**  
NH Fish & Game  
Department

Staff:

**Tracie Sales**  
Program Manager

**Nisa Marks**  
Program Assistant

**Vacant**  
Watershed Coordinator

N.H. Rivers Management and Protection Program

# N.H. Rivers Management Advisory Committee

January 20, 2022

The Honorable Edward Gordon, Chair  
House Judiciary Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 208  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: HB 1195** *An act relative to public comment periods at public meetings.*

Dear Chair Gordon and Members of the Committee,

The Rivers Management Advisory Committee (RMAC) is writing to express its **support with amendment of House Bill 1195**, which would require a public comment period as part of any public meeting. The RMAC suggests **amending the bill** to strike “at the beginning of the agenda,” and leave to the discretion of the chair when during the meeting to provide for public comment.

The RMAC supports this bill with specified amendment because

- Public comment allows members of the public body to hear from those most directly affected by the subject of the meeting;
- The material presented during the meeting may address the public’s questions or concerns, meaning it will sometimes make sense for comment to be at the end of the agenda rather than the beginning; and
- Public bodies are diverse in their membership and missions. Chairs should have the discretion to place public comment at the time best suited for the way their meetings operate.

The RMAC is a legislatively created body charged to work with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to administer RSA 483, the Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Governor and Council appointed Committee is composed of members from business, agriculture, hydroelectric, municipal government, water supply, conservation, recreation, fish and game, and historical interests.

Should you have any questions regarding our testimony in support with amendment of HB 1195, please feel free to contact me at 603.796.2615 or [MLT@naturesource.net](mailto:MLT@naturesource.net).

Sincerely,



Michele L. Tremblay, Chair

cc: Rep.s Dolan, Ankarberg, Thomas, Maggiore, Cordelli, Potucek, Deshaies, Baldasaro, and Pauer

The Honorable Edward Gordon  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
HB 1195, January 20, 2022  
Page 2

RMAC Representatives

Robert R. Scott, Commissioner, NHDES

Ted Diers, Administrator, Watershed Mgmt. Bur., NHDES

Tracie Sales, Rivers and Lakes Programs Manager, NHDES

Local River Management Advisory Committee Chairs



January 20, 2022

Honorable Edward Gordon, Chairman  
House Judiciary Committee  
Legislative Office Building, Room 208  
Concord, New Hampshire

*Via Electronic Delivery Only*

*Re: HB 1195, relative to public comment periods at public meetings*

Dear Representative Gordon:

The New Hampshire Municipal Association opposes HB 1195, requiring that “all meetings of a public body open to the public” governed by the Right-to-Know Law include a minimum 15-minute “public comment period” at the beginning of the meeting. The bill does not provide any exceptions to this 15-minute rule but does allow the chair to determine the length of time for each speaker and whether to extend the comment period.

Forcing a one-size-fits-all mandate on all boards for all meetings doesn’t make sense, and doesn’t allow boards to take into account different types of meetings. Take, for example, a board that must convene for the sole purpose of conducting a nonpublic session on a serious personnel-related matter. The board would be required to allow 15 minutes of public comment before they proceed. Yet, the board is only present for a nonpublic session. As all nonpublic sessions start in a public meeting, if this bill were enacted, the board would be required to have 15 minutes of public comment.

The thousands of municipal boards across the state already have public comment periods, and tailor those periods to the kinds of attendance that they see and the type of meeting that is being conducted. Boards that don’t see much public attendance, such as cemetery trustees, often wouldn’t need 15 minutes for public comment on the rare occasion that a member of the public shows up, and board that *do* see broad public attendance by-and-large already have created public comment periods. It is unnecessary to mandate that every board have a 15-minute comment period at every board meeting. For these reasons, we ask the committee to vote to recommend HB 1195 as Inexpedient to Legislate.

Sincerely,

*Natch Greyes*

Natch Greyes

Government Affairs Counsel

cc: Committee members

HB1195 Testimony

**From:** Diane Pauer <[Diane.Pauer@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:Diane.Pauer@leg.state.nh.us)>

**Sent:** Thursday, January 20, 2022 6:03 AM

**To:** ~House Judiciary Committee <[HouseJudiciaryCommittee@leg.state.nh.us](mailto:HouseJudiciaryCommittee@leg.state.nh.us)>

**Subject:** HB 1195 relative to public comment periods at public meetings

Dear Honorable House Judiciary Committee Members:

I am writing to you as a cosponsor of **HB 1195** *relative to public comment periods at public meetings*. A public comment period at a public meeting is essential as it provides the opportunity for members of the public body to hear *directly* from the people who they govern and who are also affected by the decisions made by the public body. The opportunity for public input should unquestionably be placed at the beginning of a public meeting. This allows for the public to weigh in on topics on the agenda noticed for the present meeting before these items are discussed by the public body. Importantly, by placing a public input period at the beginning rather than at the end of a meeting, the public body may obtain relevant and important information from the public that serves to inform the public body regarding agenda items for which they may be acting upon, voting, during the course of the meeting. For this reason, waiting until the end of the meeting to allow for public input particularly on agenda items is unsound as well as counterproductive.

Public input placed at the end of a meeting, as some may suggest as preferable, would be most purposeful in allowing the public to comment upon topics *not* address at the present meeting and subsequently enable the public body to place such topics on a *future* meeting agenda.

Finally, while I understand that a public meeting is a business meeting, a balance must be achieved in order to both ensure and uphold the right of the people being governed to be heard at a public meeting. As a former Budget Committee member and chair, I understand this tradeoff firsthand; and that is why our state needs HB 1195. Public input governed by social norms at a public meeting should never be thwarted nor suppressed. The opportunity for public input at a public meeting is essential. In closing, HB 1195 serves to protect the voice of the people at public meetings in New Hampshire.

Therefore, I urge the committee to vote **OTP** on **HB 1195**.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully,

**Rep. Diane Pauer**

New Hampshire General Court - House of Representatives

Hillsborough County District 26 - Brookline/Mason

Municipal & County Government Committee Member & Committee Whip

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**Archived:** Wednesday, March 16, 2022 10:52:07 AM

**From:** [Tom Dolan](#)

**Sent:** Tuesday, January 18, 2022 7:25:05 PM

**To:** [~House Judiciary Committee](#)

**Cc:** [Al Baldasaro](#); [Alfred Baldasaro](#); [Al Baldasaro](#)

**Subject:** HB1195

**Importance:** Normal

**Attachments:** [HB 1195.docx](#);

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**Archived:** Tuesday, March 15, 2022 11:41:47 AM  
**From:** Tom Falter  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 8, 2022 9:44:03 AM  
**To:** ~House Judiciary Committee  
**Cc:** Rachel Anderson; Christine Martin  
**Subject:** HB 1195 and SB 410  
**Importance:** Normal

---

To All,

I feel these bills are not necessary at this time. They also interfere with local control. Whenever I spoke at the different committees there was a sign-in, three-minute limit and I could only speak on the agenda. Why do you have these limits?

I understand the frustration parents have with School Boards. We are doing the best we can while the Legislator wants to make it more difficult.

Your Body has more problems than we do. Could the House adopt these rules?

With highest regards,

*Tom Falter*

*Greenville, NH*

HB 1195 - AS INTRODUCED

2022 SESSION

22-2390

10/04

HOUSE BILL **1195**

AN ACT relative to public comment periods at public meetings.

SPONSORS: Rep. Dolan, Rock. 5; Rep. Ankarberg, Straf. 10; Rep. Thomas, Rock. 5; Rep. Maggiore, Rock. 22; Rep. Cordelli, Carr. 4; Rep. Potucek, Rock. 6; Rep. Deshaies, Carr. 6; Rep. Baldasaro, Rock. 5; Rep. Pauer, Hills. 26

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

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ANALYSIS

This bill requires that all open meetings of public bodies have a period designated for public comment.

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Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.  
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~  
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

*In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Two*

AN ACT                   relative to public comment periods at public meetings.

*Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:*

1           1 New Paragraph; Access to Governmental Records and Meetings; Meeting Open to the Public;  
2 Public Comment. Amend RSA 91-A:2 by inserting after paragraph III the following new paragraph:

3           IV. All meetings of a public body open to the public under this chapter shall include a period  
4 of public comment at the beginning of the agenda for the meeting. The chairperson may determine  
5 the length of time, for both total time and individual time, for the public comment but shall not limit  
6 or censor the content of the public comment; provided, however, that the period of public comment  
7 shall not be limited to a total time period of less than 15 minutes unless no further public comment  
8 is offered.

9           2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect 60 days after its passage.