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Senate acts to support taxpayers and local control

Senate Bills 1, 11, 15 and 16 all pass

(Concord) The state Senate passed four bills today dedicated to supporting taxpayers and local control with issues ranging from collective bargaining agreements and police commissions to warrant articles and the duties of tax collectors.

Senate President Peter Bragdon (R-Milford) said he was pleased with what was accomplished saying, "The mood in the chamber reflects the Senate's determination to get right down to business in the new legislative session. Clearly, the budget and education funding will require a great deal of our attention. However, we're also dedicated to giving local officials, who know their communities best, the ability to make certain decisions regarding how to handle their finances and conduct voting procedures, specifically in SB2 towns. It's important that the state allow town clerks more latitude, make passing warrant articles easier and let communities decide whether they need a local board such as a police commission."

The Senate began the day debating **Senate Bill 1** which will eliminate the automatic continuation requirement for public employee collective bargaining agreements, also referred to as the "Evergreen Bill". In his floor remarks, prime sponsor Sen. Bob Odell (R-Lempster) said the legislation is necessary to correct the current law allowing pay increases and other monetary benefits to continue even after a contract has expired. "These automatic increases can result in long-term expenses on the employer and taxpayers that were never approved and were not budgeted by the local government at the time the contract was signed," he said.

The three other bills gaining Senate passage include:

SB – 11: allowing the Town of Hooksett to rescind its police commission through a warrant article.

SB – 15: increasing the amount of receipts that tax collectors can accumulate before being required to remit the money to their town/city treasurer. The new total is \$1,500 up from \$500.

SB – 16: requiring towns that operating under SB 2 to keep the substance of the subject matter of a warrant article when it is amended.

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