

Senate Election Law and Internal Affairs Committee

Kelly Flathers 271-3093

HB 475, relative to honoring Jessie Doe and Mary L.R. Farnum, the first women elected to the New Hampshire house of representatives.

Hearing Date: April 4, 2017

Time Opened: 9:03 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:10 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Birdsell, Gray, Sanborn and Woodburn

Members of the Committee Absent: Senator Soucy

Bill Analysis: This bill directs the joint legislative historical committee to give priority to hanging portraits in the state house of Jessie Doe and Mary L.R. Farnum, the first women elected to the New Hampshire house of representatives.

Sponsors:

Rep. Cushing

Rep. Pantelakos

Rep. Wallner

Sen. Soucy

Rep. Alicea

Rep. DeSimone

Rep. Wall

Sen. Hennessey

Rep. Keans

Rep. Rouillard

Sen. Fuller Clark

Sen. Carson

Who supports the bill: Sen. Fuller Clark - District 21; Rep. Renny Cushing - Rockingham 21; Sen. Donna Soucy - District 18; Sen. Sharon Carson - District 14; Rep. Dianne Schuett - Merrimack 20; Rep. Sandra B. Keans - Strafford 23

Who opposes the bill: No one

Who is neutral on the bill: No one

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Rep. Renny Cushing – Rockingham 21

- As we approach the bicentennial celebration of our State House and the centennial celebration of women's right to vote, it is appropriate for us to recognize and honor pioneering members of the House of Representatives.
- Jessie Doe and Mary Farnum were the first women elected to the House of Representatives, shortly after women got the right to vote. They are both impressive in their own right. They chose to sit next to each other.
- This would make it a priority to secure portraits to hang in the State House.

There's no appropriation, but my assumption is that there would be money raised.

Sen. Sanborn

- (Q) I am concerned with how divided our country is. Every time I see an award proposed for one class of people, I question why we aren't supporting everybody. Is this creating a deeper division? If we're going to recognize the first two women, why aren't we recognizing the first two men?
 - (A) **Rep. Cushing:** It's a given that the first members of the House were all property owning men. Getting the right to vote for women came with struggle and controversy. Both parties are being represented by these women. At this time, it was hard to get used to the idea of women voting, as well as holding office. It's important to honor their legacy.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None

Neutral Information Presented: None

Future Action: Ought to Pass

KEF

Date Hearing Report completed: April 4, 2017