



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

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### **Senate Democrats Advance Unemployment Benefits and Workers' Protections in the Granite Promise Plan**

**CONCORD** - Today, the Senate Commerce Committee passed Amendment #1349s to HB 1166, moving forward with the second portion of the Granite Promise Plan. The amendment is co-sponsored by Senate President Donna Soucy (D-Manchester) and Senate Majority Leader Dan Feltes (D-Concord).

**After the hearing, Senate President Donna Soucy (D-Manchester) and Senate Majority Leader Dan Feltes (D-Concord) issued the following statements:**

"Thousands of Granite Staters have found themselves out of work as a result of the coronavirus. It is incumbent upon every lawmaker to do all we can to ensure their continued financial security as our economy continues to be impacted by this public health crisis," stated **Senate President Donna Soucy (D-Manchester)**. "While New Hampshire's economy is slowly reopening, it is clear that the protections put into place during the state of emergency need to be extended as we await the development and distribution of a vaccine and the resumption of all sectors of our economy. These protections include a permanent increase in the scale of weekly unemployment benefits, waiving the waiting week, and addressing state law that currently penalizes people seeking unemployment benefits who took family and medical leave in the prior year. This amendment codifies those protections with a sunset clause to give New Hampshire workers the piece of mind that even after the state of emergency is lifted, these protections will not be."

**Senate Majority Leader Dan Feltes (D-Concord)** added, "Our self employed workers have been left to navigate a system that was not built to protect them. Our computer systems and programming left an entire segment of our workforce disenfranchised by the system meant to offer financial security for all of those out of work due to COVID-19. This amendment allocates crucial funding to update our unemployment insurance systems and give all Granite Staters the peace of mind they deserve. When people do return to work, it is critical that their safety is made a top priority. Paid leave for getting tested for COVID-19, waiving cost sharing and treatment for COVID-19, personal protective equipment (PPE) in workplaces with 10 or more individuals, state provided PPE for our small businesses--these are all steps that must be taken as we begin to recover."

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