



## NH SENATE PRESS RELEASE

**June 16, 2020**

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### **Bipartisan Bill to Increase Police Accountability and Improve Bail Reform Passes New Hampshire Senate**

**CONCORD** - Today, the Senate passed HB 1645, 23-1, a bipartisan criminal justice bill, co-sponsored by Senate Judiciary Chair Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover), Senator Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline), and Senator Harold French (R-Franklin). HB 1645 next goes to the House of Representatives for a concurrence vote, which requires a simple majority.

#### **After the vote, Senate Judiciary Chair Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover) and Senator Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline) issued the following statements:**

“As a country, we are looking for significant changes to our law enforcement changes and policy from our lawmakers,” said **Senator Martha Hennessey (D-Hanover)**. “Some of the Legislature’s most important work this session have been criminal justice reforms including improvements to our bail reform statute, increasing the safety of New Hampshire’s minors, and strengthening accountability for perpetrators of domestic violence. Making New Hampshire a safer place to live, where transparency and justice are paramount, takes bipartisanship. I am proud of the work done by the Judiciary committee in advance of this session and the collaboration of the entire Senate today to move these important measures forward.

**Senator Melanie Levesque (D-Brookline)** added, “The nation’s eyes are on our criminal justice system following the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the subsequent protests in response. The New Hampshire Legislature is working to take thoughtful, concrete steps to improve our criminal justice system including mandating that police report misconduct by fellow police officers and increasing access to psychological screening before officers assume duties. We must look to the country as a whole and take steps to break down systemic racism that allow New Hampshire residents to feel safe -- including a codified prohibition of chokeholds. Though in New Hampshire, Police Standards and Training does not train recruits on chokehold techniques and many police departments have reported that it is not in their procedures, we know that codifying that practice into state law is a critical step towards our state’s collective security. This conversation has just begun and will continue for years to come. I am proud of the collaboration among my Senate colleagues and stakeholders - including the NH Police Association - as we take these first steps and I look forward to our continued work in the next biennium.”

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**On Background:**

- HB 1645 includes text from the following bills:
  - SB 755 *relative to superior court judgments in actions against the state*
  - SB 551 *adding a bail commissioner to the commission on pretrial detention, pretrial scheduling, and pretrial services, and relative to the release of a defendant pending trial*
  - HB 1272 *prohibiting prison privatization*
  - HB 1645 *relative to the annulment of misdemeanor domestic violence offenses*
  - SB 722 *relative to the payment and education of bail commissioners, relative to criteria for determining an offender's indigence, and establishing a committee to study providing remote access to a bail commissioner's services.*
  - HB 1351 *relative to immunity from arrest or prosecution for certain alcoholic beverage violations for a person under 21 years of age who reports a situation involving risk of alcohol overdose*
  - HB 1217 *requiring police officers to report misconduct*
  - HB 1468 *relative to criminal mischief*
  - HB 1174 (New Title) *requiring screening for all law enforcement officers for psychological stability prior to assuming their duties as certified officers*