



Labor Relations

WEEK™

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Labor Law

New Hampshire Senate OKs Right-to-Work Bill Passed by House

BOSTON—The New Hampshire Senate April 20 voted 16-8 to approve a House-passed bill ([H.B. 474](#)) that would implement a right-to-work law, effective Jan. 1, 2012.

The vote is sufficient to override a threatened veto by Gov. John Lynch (D). The House in February voted by slightly less than two-thirds, 221-131, to approve the measure, but 48 representatives did not cast ballots ([25 LRW 332, 2/24/11](#)). Republicans hold a 298-102 advantage in the House.

In approving the measure, the Senate removed a House provision that would eliminate the requirement that public sector unions represent nonmembers. The two chambers must agree on a single version before the bill reaches Lynch's desk.

Enactment of the bill would make New Hampshire the 23rd state in the country and the first in the Northeast with a right-to-work law. Right-to-work legislation has come up regularly in the New Hampshire legislature over the past two decades but never has come close to passage.

Under the language of the bill, no person would be required “as a condition of employment or continuation of employment” to become a union member, to pay dues to a union or a charity or other third party in lieu thereof, or to resign or refrain from union membership.

Employers would be prohibited from deducting union dues without employee authorization and they would be required to post a notice informing workers of their right to refrain from joining a union. Employers or unions violating the law would be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or 90 days' imprisonment for each offense.

The statute would not apply to federal employees or those covered by the Railway Labor Act.