

*[The following occurred at the end of the last term. Due to the deceit of a couple individuals in leadership apparently for the benefits of friends and donors, it required HB737 to be filed this past year].

01-30-25 – Original Draft date

History of HB1223 [2024] – Local Option for Charity Casinos

A bi-partisan bill was brought forward to allow municipalities to decide whether “charity” casinos would be permitted just as we do with Keno. The bill was initiated in the House Municipal and County Government committee, of which I was Chairman at the time.

The bill passed in the committee and in the House. It came out of the Senate with minor changes, Senator Lang then contacted me for a couple minor word changes to clarify, which I agreed to. I recommended a Committee of Conference (COC) to the House, which passed by voice vote.

I set up a COC which included four members of the House: Rep Dave Rochefort (prime sponsor of the bill), two democrats from the M&CG Committee and myself as the Chairman. Senator Lang and I got the amended language prepared for the COC well in advance.

A few days before the COC, I received a call from Majority Leader Osborne asking me “What are you and Lang up to”? I had no idea what he was referring to, and said as much. He mentioned something about “historic horse racing” and the Sanborn’s casino, which the bill had nothing to do with as far as I was concerned.

The day prior to the COC, I received an email from the Speaker’s office saying “Rochefort was being removed from the COC and Rep Joe Sweeney would be replacing him. At this point, based on past history of several in leadership’s friendliness with casino operators, I knew what was going to happen. I immediately sent a return email to the Speaker asking “why was Rochefort being replaced, who made the decision and why was the Chairman of the COC not consulted first”. I received no reply.

The COC met the following day. Since the language on the amendment had been finalized, a motion was made to accept and all 7 members of the COC nodded in agreement, including Sweeney. The deadline for the sign-off was 4pm the following day.

At about 4:30 on the day of the deadline, Clerk Paul Smith called to tell me what I already knew, that Sweeney had not signed off on the COC effectively killing the bill granting municipalities local control. The casino friendlies in leadership cancelled the tremendous work of the sponsors, and the affirmative vote of both the House and Senate.

I then contacted the Speaker’s office to set up a meeting with Packard regarding this issue and two other equally disgusting incidents that had occurred (subject of another paper). I met with

him the following week. I asked “who made the decision” on the COC swap. He joyfully mentioned that he had “been a member on a discussion panel” somewhere, and that “Steve Smith and Jason Osborne had been left in charge for the week”. That particular week was the most important week of the year with multiple COCs scheduled each day, not the time for a Speaker to be “missing in action”. (It was later revealed that he may have been in Greece).

Previous to the meeting, I had found through campaign finance forms in the SOS office that Packard had been given \$15,000 by the New Hampshire Group, LLC which happens to own 4 casinos in NH. Another \$1000 check came from NH Charitable Game Operators Association, INC. These contributions were received by Packard on dates in October of 2024, yet they are reported on the 2022 election cycle. Why? It would appear these donations may have been part of a pay-to-play “thank you” and an attempt was made to conceal those by “mistakenly” entering into the previous term campaign finance pages. (Related, an expenditure for Tandy’s (\$2180.59) is also recorded on October 10, 2024 yet shows up on the 2022 election cycle report). There are other many, many other campaign donation and campaign filing issues involved, the subject of yet another paper to come.

To this day, I have never received answers to my questions regarding the Sweeney swap out for the COC.

Sweeney, as a member of the Salem City council, recently voted to approve a Casino in the Tuscan Village. Rep Fred Doucette (current Speaker Pro-tempore and Deputy Majority Leader last term), a well-known casino supporter and advocate, also lives in Salem and was a named member of the Commission on Charitable Gaming.

An recent article alerted the public to a court filing which included two members of House leadership, an article interestingly omitted from the House Republican daily brief of news ([GOP lawmakers ask court to take up Concord Casino appeal | New Hampshire Public Radio](#)). On January 7, 2025, both Osborne and Sweeney were signatories to a filed amicus brief with the NH Supreme Court on behalf of the operator/owners of the Concord Casino located above “The Draft” and owned by Laurie and Andy Sanborn. Laurie was Speaker Pro-tempore last term and had also been appointed as Chairwoman of the Commission on Charitable gaming. In that brief, the court is asked to allow the Sanborns to sell their casino license which is potentially worth millions. There is obviously a connection between Sweeney/Osborne killing HB1223 and this amicus brief, the same names are involved. There is a long business/political relationship between many of those mentioned in this paper and former Rep Laurie Sanborn.

It appears the “relationship” plays a prominent role in both the killing of HB1223 and the filing of the amicus brief. While Osborne and Sweeney claim they are only petitioning for the benefit of the citizens, there is obviously more to the story. More likely for the “benefit” of a few select Representatives and their friends.

Docket of HB1223

[Docket Abbreviations](#)

Bill Title: (New Title) creating local options for games of chance.

Official Docket of **HB1223**..

Date	Body	Description
12/1/2023	H	Introduced 01/03/2024 and referred to Municipal and County Government
1/8/2024	H	Public Hearing: 01/17/2024 02:15 pm LOB 301-303
2/21/2024	H	Public Hearing on non-germane Amendment #2024-0805h : 03/06/2024 01:00 pm LOB 307
3/6/2024	H	==RECESSED== Executive Session: 03/11/2024 09:30 am LOB 301-303
3/11/2024	H	==CONTINUED== Executive Session: 03/20/2024 10:00 am LOB 301-303
3/20/2024	H	Majority Committee Report: Ought to Pass with Amendment #2024-1218h (NT) 03/20/2024 (Vote 15-5; RC) HC 12 P. 34
3/20/2024	H	Minority Committee Report: Inexpedient to Legislate
3/28/2024	H	Lay HB1223 on Table (Rep. Yokela): MF DV 166-196 03/28/2024 HJ 10 P. 186
3/28/2024	H	Amendment #2024-1218h (NT): AA DV 282-86 03/28/2024 HJ 10 P. 186
3/28/2024	H	Ought to Pass with Amendment 2024-1218h: MA VV 03/28/2024 HJ 10 P. 186
4/2/2024	S	Introduced 03/21/2024 and Referred to Ways and Means; SJ 8
4/18/2024	S	===ROOM CHANGE=== Hearing : 04/24/2024, Room 100, SH, 09:45 am; SC 16
5/8/2024	S	Committee Report: Ought to Pass, 05/16/2024, Vote 4-1; SC 19
5/15/2024	S	Special Order to Beginning of Calendar, Without Objection, MA; 05/15/2024; SJ 12
5/15/2024	S	Sen. Lang Floor Amendment #2024-2007s , AA, VV; 05/15/2024; SJ 12
5/15/2024	S	Ought to Pass with Amendment 2024-2007s, MA, VV; OT3rdg; 05/15/2024; SJ 12
5/29/2024	H	House Non-Concurs with Senate Amendment 2024-2007s and Requests CofC (Reps. L. Turcotte, Rochefort, Gilman, Howland): MA VV 05/29/2024 HJ 14 P. 179
5/30/2024	S	Sen. Lang Accedes to House Request for Committee of Conference, MA, VV; 05/30/2024; SJ 16
5/30/2024	S	President Appoints: Senators Lang, Innis, D'Allesandro; 05/30/2024; SJ 16
6/4/2024	H	Conferee Change: Rep. Sweeney Replaces Rep. Rochefort 06/04/2024 HJ 15 P. 35
6/5/2024	H	Conference Committee Meeting: 06/05/2024 10:30 am LOB 305
6/6/2024	S	Conference Committee Report; Not Signed Off; SJ 17
6/7/2024	H	Conference Committee Report; not signed Off; HJ 15