

REBECCA PERKINS **KWOKA** **STATE SENATE**

Hi everyone,

Last Thursday was one eventful day! Our Senate session lasted most of the day and covered a ton of ground. Amidst all of the action, I want to bring you two especially troubling developments.

LSB 96: Senate Republicans Vote to Remove LEACT

Commission Recommendations: This summer, the LEACT Commission met 26 times over the course of 10 weeks to develop legislative recommendations for New Hampshire that would begin to answer the national call to fight for racial justice. These recommendations culminated in SB 96; yet Senate Republicans voted to remove Sections 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 13 of SB 96, stripping all data collection that was unanimously recommended by the LEACT Commission and a broad group of stakeholders who drafted the bill.

While I am proud to have supported the remaining recommendations, I am disappointed that my Republican colleagues ignored expert guidance. The recommendations they

removed would have given us a clearer picture of the systemic racism BIPOC folks face every day, and what the reality is here in our home state. And as we move forward, we need to listen to our communities of color on how best to support them and fight against systemic racism; we cannot substitute our own experience or anecdotes for the data that will tell us what the reality is, and what we need to do.

The bill now moves on to the Finance Committee where the conversation will continue. Check out a recent Concord Monitor piece [here](#) for more.

SB 130: Voucher Program Passes Senate

SB 130 would create a highly-controversial voucher program that sends taxpayer dollars to subsidize private and religious institutions with no oversight. New Hampshire already has a worst-in-the-nation state funding for education and implementing this program would further divert funding away from our public schools. And the House Education Committee already rejected HB 20, the mirror bill to SB 130, with over 3,000 people signing in opposition.

When we invest in public education, every student is given the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive. The fact is that voucher programs have not been shown to improve outcomes for students—and in some studies, it actually produces worse long-term outcomes for students, particularly in STEM subjects.

So where do we go from here? As we move forward with advocacy on both fronts—against the voucher program and for the inclusion of all LEACT recommendations—let's make our support loud and clear. Contact your [Representative](#), [Senator](#), and our [Governor](#) today!

It can seem like an overwhelming time right now, with a slate of troubling legislation making its way through our state government. But as you continue pushing forward, know that your efforts are not in vain. For all of the bills like SB 130, we've also passed exciting legislation that has received bipartisan support, like expanding renter's protections and sending relief to newly-opened small businesses. And these successes have been in large part due to you taking the time to show up to committee hearings, writing to your legislators, and making your voice heard. You have, and will continue to, make a difference. Please stay tuned!

All my best,
Rebecca

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