

NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER

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Senate GOP puts NH families first

By Patrick Hynes

THERE'S no point in denying it — these are troubling times for Republicans. Disappointing election results, the speakership fiasco in Washington, and a general lack of leadership and direction at the national level have left Republicans reeling.

Yet as many observed after the November election, voters put a considerable amount of trust in genuine, common sense conservative leaders around the country. Our own Gov. Chris Sununu won reelection handily, as did Ron DeSantis of Florida, Greg Abbott of Texas, Brian Kemp of Georgia, and others. Understood in context, the election results reveal a distaste among the electorate for the bull-in-a-china-shop wing of the GOP but a true appreciation for the conservative fiscal and pro-family policies of Republican leadership in the states.

Look no further than the top priorities of the New Hampshire Senate Republicans for an example of these policies. At a press conference last week, Senate President Jeb Bradley and the Republicans in the state Senate unveiled their plan, "Fighting for Granite State Families in 2023" — a catalogue of initiatives that, if passed, will help working families weather the difficult economic storm.

Citing a cocktail of economic woes — inflation, rising interest rates, and the possibility of a recession — Sen. Bradley said, "people are worried right now, so our agenda focuses on helping people that need help and making sure we do everything we possibly can to keep our economy strong."

"We absolutely have to maintain a competitive position vis a vis other states. That means the reforms that we've made to lower business taxes and lower workers comp costs, to not have an income tax, not have a sales tax, are essential for our 2023 and 2024 agenda," Bradley continued.

The most important goal of the new Senate GOP leadership is a balanced state budget that prioritizes spending to New Hampshire's most vulnerable populations while continuing to protect taxpayers. On this ground, the Republicans have earned a tremendous amount of credibility. The state's Democrats have maligned Republican business tax cuts, but years of ballooning budget surpluses give testimony to the GOP's sound fiscal management. Small businesses and families know New Hampshire Senate Republicans are looking out for them.

While their agenda is heavily focused on maintaining the Granite State's economic strength, the senators are also committed to targeting state education aid to the districts that most need it; protecting parents' rights and education options under the state's education freedom accounts program and charter schools; lowering electric rates by expanding the supply of new energy



sources, both traditional and renewable; improving rural broadband access; addressing the state's homelessness situation; and beefing up the state's mental health services.

One of the most compelling priorities articulated by the Senate GOP last week is protecting New Hampshire's environment. Republicans have been reliable stewards of the state's environment for decades, though they are rarely credited for their good work.

"As Granite Staters we all treasure the pristine natural landscape of our state," said Sen. Denise Ricciardi (R-Bedford) at the press conference. "It is our duty as legislators to protect our environment, ensure that our drinking water is clean, and that future generations will be able to enjoy our beautiful mountains, lakes, rivers and seacoast."

Sen. Howard Pearl (R-Loudon), who is a farmer, echoed her sentiments. "Protecting our environment is an important foundation for our agriculture economy. Being caretakers of our natural resources is essential to our livelihood," he said.

In addition, returning Sen. Dan Innis (R-Bradford) addressed the housing crisis in the Granite State. "We face a critical housing shortage that is impacting our ability to grow our economy and attract a workforce," he said. "We must continue to incentivize public-private partnerships and create innovative programs so that we can meet this growing need."

Absent from their agenda are niche ideological issues and special interest appeals.

This is conservative leadership. Prudent. Forward thinking. Bold yet time-tested. This is why people vote Republican, when in fact they do.

As Gov. Sununu crowed during his fourth inaugural address last week, New Hampshire ranks number one in the nation for personal freedoms, economic opportunity, and public safety. These superlatives are not accidental; they are the result of good public policies like those laid out by Sen. Bradley and his colleagues.

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