

LEGISLATURE

Deregulating homeschooling bill draws fans, skeptics

By Kevin Landrigan
Union Leader Staff

A bill to deregulate homeschooling drew support from many parents and some advocacy groups while others warned that it could put some children at greater risk of being harmed.

A three-hour public hearing before the House Education Policy and Administration Committee late last week underscored how difficult it's been to reach legislative consensus

on changes to the legal framework for homeschooling in New Hampshire.

The amended bill (HB 1268) would remove the requirement that parents notify school districts when they decided to homeschool their children.

The notification under this bill would be mandated only if a parent sought to have their child receive services at the public school such as attending a specific class.

It would change from required to voluntary that there

be an annual evaluation of a homeschooled student's progress.

And it would create an optional "certificate of completion" homeschool students could receive that supporters say could help them if they wish to pursue higher education.

"This is the right time to get this done," said Committee Chairman Kristin Noble, R-Bedford, who presented a third draft after getting changes suggested from those on a large Facebook chat group.

"It means parents are in the driver's seat and they can make the decision when it is appropriate to do an evaluation," she said.

NH in the middle of the pack

Rep. Michael Granger, R-Milton, said New Hampshire is in the middle of the pack when it comes to ranking states by how lenient homeschool regulations are.

Manhattan Institute for

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Riding the storm out



Above, Heather Pratt, who just flew in to Manchester-Boston Regional Airport from California, gets comfortable as she waits for her father, Thearion Pratt, to pick her up after he was delayed driving down from Croydon in Monday's nor'easter.

At right, Plow driver Colin Newbold of Manchester heads back to his rig after making a pit stop in Manchester on Monday.

DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER



PITTSBURG

FBI: Border Patrol agent returned fire in shooting

By Paul Feely
Union Leader Staff

A person was shot by a U.S. Border Patrol agent early Sunday morning near the Canadian border in Pittsburg, after reportedly shooting at the agent, officials said.

"The subject allegedly fired at the agent, the agent returned fire, striking the subject, who is

now receiving medical attention at an area hospital," Kristen M. Setera with the FBI's Boston Division wrote in an email Monday morning.

The incident happened around 1 a.m. Sunday. The agent was not hurt in the shooting, Setera said.

The medical status of the individual who was shot has not been released, and details of

the incident that led up to the shooting have not been disclosed.

The FBI and the U.S. Attorney's Office in the District of New Hampshire are investigating the shooting, Setera said.

"The FBI Boston Field Office will be investigating the incident. CBP is cooperating fully with investigators. For more information, we refer you to the

FBI," U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Rodney S. Scott said in a statement.

New Hampshire House Majority Leader Jason Osborne (R-Auburn) released the following statement following Sunday's shooting, saying the men and women of the Border Patrol confront danger "so we don't

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BEDFORD

Town approves 21 housing units on Constitution Drive

By Zachary Marano
Union Leader Staff

The last undeveloped parcel on Constitution Drive in Bedford will be used for 21 housing units — a somewhat unusual use in a designated office district, but one that fits existing zoning amendments.

These single-family homes will be cottage court-style units — smaller buildings in two clusters around a central common open space and designed to be pedestrian-friendly.

Jonathan Devine, a civil engineer for TF Moran and contractor on the project, said the development seeks to offer smaller-scale homes with a more "compact, green aesthetic" to prospective residents.

"This 1,500-square-foot housing model is something that this town hasn't seen. It's detached, which is unique in nature. Typically, a home of this size you'd see in a conglomerate-style building," Devine said. "This offers a breath of fresh air and a little bit of a diverse housing opportunity for new residents or existing residents within the town."

Devine answered questions from Planning Board members at a Feb. 9 meeting on behalf of the owner and applicant, West Keene Street LLC.

Constitution Drive is in the northern part of town, near the intersection of state Routes 101 and 114, abutting Manchester's West Side. It's currently home to the town's safety complex and offices for insurance,

medical and tech companies.

Cottage courts were enabled through a zoning amendment last year in several zoning districts, including commercial and office zones.

This was the first development of its kind to receive the required permitting from the town's Planning Board, according to Devine, and they'll be located on an 11-acre parcel.

Planning Board members approved a conditional-use permit for the project unanimously, provided the property owner and engineering firm address permitting and fire safety conditions, and redesign the sidewalk along the access drive as required by staff during technical review.

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COMMON MAN

New CEO has worked his way up

■ Sean Brown started as a server in Meredith.

By Jonathan Phelps
Union Leader Staff

The Common Man restaurant group's new CEO is no stranger to the company, having started as a server at the former Boathouse Grille, now Lago, in Meredith more than three decades ago.

Sean Brown, who most recently served as chief operations officer, will replace Vincent Vella, who had served as CEO since 2018.

With the promotion, Brown will lead the "independent hospitality family in implementing strategic initiatives, driving business growth, and monitoring financial performance," according to a news release. The company has more than 650 employees, according to its website.

Common Man owner and founder Alex Ray said it was an easy choice to select Brown for the top job.

"He's moved up through the ranks and has been a strong leader in many facets of our complex business," Ray said in a statement.

Brown will oversee the daily operations of 17 restaurants, four inns, two stores, and The Flying Monkey Movie House and Performance Center. The company has a storied history since Ray opened the first Common Man in Ashland in 1971 on the first floor of his home.

Before taking on a companywide position, Brown he served as a district operations manager overseeing The Common Man's specialty brands including all Meredith locations, and Foster's Boiler Room and The Italian Farmhouse in Plymouth.

Brown said the company is working to keep its menus fresh and "appeal to the next generation" while focusing on traditional fare that longtime guests enjoy.



PROVIDED BY THE COMMON MAN

Sean Brown has worked his way up the ranks at The Common Man to become CEO.

EDUCATION

Derry's loss is Hampstead's gain for new superintendent

■ Joseph Crawford leaving his hometown district to lead schools in neighboring town.

By Julie Huss
Union Leader Correspondent

A longtime educator and administrator is saying goodbye to Derry and will start a job in Hampstead.

Joseph Crawford, currently the assistant superintendent in the Derry Cooperative School District, will leave the job at the end of the school year to take the superintendent role in the Hampstead School District.

At a meeting Feb. 10, Derry School Board members accepted Crawford's resignation.

For Crawford, it's hard to say goodbye to his hometown district. He credited many who supported him along his journey.

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Joseph Crawford