

HB 1313-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2902

12/09

HOUSE BILL ***1313-FN***

AN ACT repealing buffer zones for reproductive health care facilities.

SPONSORS: Rep. Aures, Merr. 13; Rep. Belcher, Carr. 4; Rep. Granger, Straf. 2; Rep. Thibault,
Merr. 25; Rep. Wood, Merr. 13

COMMITTEE: Judiciary

ANALYSIS

This bill repeals the prohibition on entering or remaining on a public way or sidewalk adjacent to a reproductive health care facility.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT repealing buffer zones for reproductive health care facilities.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Short Title. This act shall be known as "The Sidewalk Free Speech Act."

2 2 Findings and Purpose. The general court finds that:

3 I. The exercise of a person's right to free speech is a first amendment activity, and one which
4 the New Hampshire Bill of Rights is especially zealous in protecting. N.H. const. part 1 art. 22
5 (stating that "Free speech... ought... to be inviolably preserved.") The right to free speech protects
6 viewpoints which are controversial, unpopular, and offensive or otherwise inconvenient.

7 II. RSA 132:37 through RSA 132:40 would infringe upon free speech.

8 III. The United States Supreme Court has observed that "one-on-one communication' is 'the
9 most effective, fundamental, and perhaps economical avenue of political discourse.'... 'handing out
10 leaflets in the advocacy of a politically controversial viewpoint... is the essence of First Amendment
11 expression'; '[n]o form of speech is entitled to greater constitutional protection.'... When the
12 government makes it more difficult to engage in these modes of communication, it imposes an
13 especially significant First Amendment burden." *McCullen v. Coakley*, 573 U.S. 464, 488-489 (2014)
14 (citing *Meyer v. Grant*, 486 U.S. 414, 424, (1988); *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Comm'n*, 514 U.S. 334,
15 347 (1995)).

16 IV. RSA 132:37 through RSA 132:40, if ever implemented through the demarcation of a
17 buffer zone, would be subject to immediate constitutional challenge. *Reddy v. Foster*, (stating that
18 plaintiffs will have standing to challenge the constitutionality of the law once an abortion clinic
19 "demarcate[s] a zone.")

20 V. If subject to constitutional challenge, RSA 132:37 through RSA 132:40 is likely to be, and
21 ought to be, struck down under either the federal or state Bills of Rights. *McCullen v. Coakley*, 573
22 U.S. 464 (2014) (correctly invalidating Massachusetts buffer zones under the First Amendment).

23 VI. RSA 132:37 through RSA 132:40 has served no public purpose.

24 3 Repeal. RSA 132:37 through 132:40, relative to access to reproductive health care facilities,
25 are repealed.

26 4 Effective Date. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

**HB 1313-FN- FISCAL NOTE
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AN ACT repealing buffer zones for reproductive health care facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Revenue Fund</i>	None			
Expenditures*	Indeterminable			
<i>Funding Source</i>	General Fund			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
County Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
County Expenditures	Indeterminable			
Local Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Expenditures	Indeterminable			

METHODOLOGY:

This bill adds, deletes, or modifies a criminal penalty, or changes statute to which there is a penalty for violation. Therefore, this bill may have an impact on the judicial and correctional systems, which could affect prosecution, incarceration, probation, and parole costs, for the state, as well as county and local governments. A summary of such costs can be found at: https://gencourt.state.nh.us/lba/Budget/Fiscal_Notes/JudicialCorrectionalCosts.pdf

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Judicial Branch, Judicial Council, Department of Justice, Department of Corrections, New Hampshire Association of Counties, and New Hampshire Municipal Association