

# Senate Commerce Committee

*Aaron Jones 271-2609*

**SB 418**, prohibiting municipalities from requiring licenses for the production and sale of homestead food products.

**Hearing Date:** January 13, 2026

**Time Opened:** 10:51 a.m.

**Time Closed:** 11:06 a.m.

**Members of the Committee Present:** Senators Innis, Ricciardi, McGough, Fenton and Reardon

**Members of the Committee Absent :** Senator Murphy

**Bill Analysis:** This bill prohibits municipalities from requiring licenses for the production and sale of homestead food products.

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**Sponsors:**

Sen. Sullivan

Sen. Lang

Sen. Murphy

Sen. Innis

Sen. McGough

Sen. Pearl

Rep. J. Aron

Rep. Sabourin dit

Rep. Kesselring

Choiniere

Rep. Paquette

Rep. Warden

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**Who supports the bill:** Senator Victoria Sullivan, Senator Howard Pearl, Senator Tim McGough, Senator Daniel Innis, Representative Yury Polozov, Daniel Mowery, Crissy Kantor, Paul LaFerriere, Sarah Scott (AFP-NH), Julie Smith

**Who opposes the bill:** No one

**Who is neutral on the bill:** No one

**Summary of testimony presented in support:**

***Senator Victoria Sullivan***

- Senator Sullivan filed this bill on behalf of a constituent who gained national attention through what was known as “Pickle Gate.”
- This constituent made pickles in their kitchen, which were then posted on Facebook. Despite not selling any pickles to the public, the constituent received a cease and desist letter from the Manchester Health Department.
- Senator Sullivan said these rules, specifically related to pickling, shed light on government overreach.

- Manchester also banned lemonade stands and baked goods from being used in school fundraisers. To participate in a fundraiser, items had to be store bought and individually wrapped. Compared to baked goods, these items are less healthy and they are filled with chemical additives.
- Despite enormous pressure, pickles have remained outlawed.
- New Hampshire has recognized the tradition of homesteading, and the established regulations are reasonable; therefore, Senator Sullivan said they should be honored throughout the state.
- Senator Sullivan said opponents of this bill have brought up food safety concerns. Nationally, however, fresh fruits and vegetables cause more illnesses than homemade pickles. The food industry is highly regulated, yet there are outbreaks of listeria, E.coli, and other foodborne illnesses.
- Manchester residents could go to Hooksett to sell their pickles, but they are outlawed from doing so within Manchester city limits.

***Sarah Scott, Deputy State Director, Americans for Prosperity-NH***

- Homesteading is a way for many Granite Staters to participate in local markets as well as earn income to provide for their families. This bill would help to protect this opportunity.
- Similar legislation to allow individuals to prepare and sell certain foods without a license has been part of a broader trend nationwide.
- Currently, local rules are overriding the state framework causing confusion and inconsistencies.
- Ms. Scott said government should make it easier, not harder, for individuals to turn their skills into income.
- If a product is exempt under state law, this bill would ensure that the rules are not different from town to town.
- If she wanted to participate in a farmers' market in the cities around Somersworth, Ms. Scott said she would not be able to because they have different food licensing requirements. For many individuals, burdens and obstacles like this make it difficult to get started.
- Removing unnecessary hurdles and aligning state law helps to keep local markets vibrant and dollars circulating within communities.
- This bill struck a balance between protecting public health, while also empowering Granite Staters to work, create, and contribute.

***Daniel Mowery***

- Mr. Mowery said he was the “pickle guy,” and he had been canning them since he was 15 years old. When he cans his bread and butter pickles, he checks the pH level. Anything under 4.6 is considered safe, and his pickles range between 3 and 4.
- Mr. Mowery said there are a lot of people in the city who make pickles, jams, jellies, and bread.

***Crissy Kantor, Ward 6 Alderman, City of Manchester***

- Alderman Kantor said the citizens of Manchester should not be treated differently than the majority of citizens throughout the state.
- Alderman Kantor said self-inspecting cities and towns should have the right to create rules that fit their communities; however, local control also meant listening to individuals who live there.
- While food safety does matter, regulations need to be based on actual risks.
- The Manchester Health Department adjusted their homestead rules to allow baking, but the rules did not fully align with rest of the state’s homestead laws.
- Adopting the state’s homestead laws would help to support small startup businesses and grandparents who have been sharing their products for decades. It also would help to boost the local economy, remove outdated restrictions that prevent individuals from selling low risk homemade goods, and promote food freedom.
- This bill would not eliminate food safety standards; instead, it would align Manchester with the same standards that are trusted throughout most of the state.
- Alderman Kantor said individuals benefitted from consistency, reduced bureaucracy, and less government overreach.

***Paul LaFerriere***

- Mr. LaFerriere asked where the fairness was because without a full investigation Mr. Mowery had been told he could not sell his own pickles.
- Mr. LaFerriere said homestead laws are meant to help the “little guy” and support their income, not create million dollar enterprises. As a retiree, this would help him because his bills keep going up.

**Summary of testimony presented in opposition:** None

**Neutral Information Presented:** None