

Senate Transportation Committee

Vivian Hall 271-3091

SB 668-FN, authorizing a historic marker on a highway for the purpose of acknowledging the abuse of former residents of the youth development center.

Hearing Date: February 17, 2026

Time Opened: 1:32 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:47 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Fenton, Prentiss and McConkey

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill authorizes a historic marker on a highway for the purpose of acknowledging the abuse of former residents of the youth development center.

Sponsors:

Sen. Watters

Sen. McGough

Sen. Perkins Kwoka

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Long

Rep. Harriott-Gathright

Rep. A. Murray

Who supports the bill: Senator David Watters, Senate District 4; Senator Donovan Fenton, Senate District 10; Senator Cindy Rosenwald, Senate District 13; and Cara Cabral.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Senator David Watters, Senate District 4

- **SB 668-FN** would authorize the installation of a historic marker by formally acknowledging the abuse suffered by former residents of the Youth Development Center, ensuring the state formally recognizes this chapter of its history.
- Sen. Watters stated that although the building may eventually be demolished, a historic marker would preserve its significance.
- He emphasized that a society's character is reflected in what it chooses to remember or forget, and that establishing a marker affirms the state's commitment to remember what occurred.

- He explained that the building qualifies for historic designation because it is over 50 years old, its use holds historical significance, and it is connected to historic events.
- He also noted that the commissioner is required to erect a marker upon receipt of a petition signed by at least 20 individuals.
- He consulted with the City of Manchester and stated that input from victims will help shape the marker's language.
- He emphasized that the proposed marker would not interfere with ongoing litigation, noting that the abuse has been well documented and that commemorating this history will help ensure future generations understand what occurred.

Senator McConkey asked what Senator Watters envisioned would go on the sign.

Senator Watters stated that he would consult with survivors to determine appropriate language for the marker. At a minimum, he said it would note that the Youth Development Center was located at the site and describe its purpose, along with a brief acknowledgment that abuse was historically suffered there.

Senator McConkey asked if this sign could become complicated.

Senator Watters responded that there is a state standard for historic markers. There are many other examples throughout the state of complicated issues being condensed for the purpose of a historic marker. He referred to the signs that designate burial grounds for Native American massacres.

Senator McConkey asked who would be paying for the sign.

Senator Watters responded that there is already a budget for these types of signs in the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources.

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Date Hearing Report completed: February 24, 2026