

Section 1 Header

2026 SESSION

26-3041.2
04/09

HOUSE BILL

[bill number]

AN ACT

establishing investigatory grand juries housed under the county sheriffs' offices.

SPONSORS: [sponsors]

COMMITTEE: [committee]

ANALYSIS

This bill establishes a framework for petition-initiated special grand juries with broad investigative authority over public institutions, detention and care facilities, financial entities, election and tax administration, corporate and professional misconduct, and federal overreach, while requiring counties to support their operations.

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Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.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 establishing investigatory grand juries housed under the county sheriffs' offices.

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

1 1 Jurors; Compensation of Jurors. Amend RSA 500-A:15, I to read as follows:
2 I. Grand and petit jurors' fees and mileage shall be paid by the state. The **petit** jurors' fees shall be \$10
3 for each half day's attendance before a superior court **and the grand jurors' fees shall be \$200 per**
4 **day;** for each mile's travel to and from the place where the juror serves, mileage shall be paid at the
5 rate of \$.20 per mile, mileage to be allowed for each day's attendance when the juror is required to
6 leave the town or city in which he resides.

7 2 New Chapter; Petition-Initiated Special Grand Juries. Amend RSA by inserting after chapter
8 600-B the following new chapter:

CHAPTER 600-C

PETITION-INITIATED SPECIAL GRAND JURIES

11 600-C:1 Petition-Initiated Special Grand Juries.
12 I. Upon the filing of a petition signed by not fewer than 500 qualified electors residing in a county, the
13 superior court shall order the convening of a special grand jury to investigate the subject matter set
14 forth in the petition.

15 II. The petition shall clearly state the subject matter to be investigated and shall include the
16 printed name, address, and signature of each qualified elector.

17 III. Upon verification that the petition meets the requirements of this section, the superior court shall
18 issue an order convening a special grand jury within 60 days. The special grand jury shall have the
19 same authority and duties as recognized under the common law and tradition.

20 IV. The costs of convening a petition-initiated special grand jury shall be borne by the
21 county in which the petition is filed.

600-C:2 Inspection of Detention and Care Facilities.

23 I. Each term the regular county grand jury shall inquire into the condition, management,
24 and operation of:

25 (a) Any county jail, house of correction, federal detainment facility, state prison or other
26 penal facility located within the county;

27 (b) Any detention facility operated by or under contract with the county or a
28 municipality within the county, including juvenile detention centers and holding facilities;

29 (c) Any institutional nursing home or long-term care facility located within the county
30 that received public funds or is operated by a public entity.

1 II. The grand jury may conduct on-site inspections, review records, and interview staff or
2 residents as necessary to fulfill its duties under this section.

3 III. Residents and prisoners shall be given a confidential means of communicating with the
4 foreman of the regular grand jury or special grand jury if they fear reprisal for providing
5 information.

6 600-C:3 Audit of Public Entities Receiving Taxpayer Funds.

7 I. The grand jury shall investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of
8 any county department, agency, or function, including any public entity that receives county or
9 municipal taxpayer funds.

10 II. At a minimum, the grand jury shall select at least one such entity for investigation
11 during each term.

12 III. The grand jury may:

13 (a) Examine financial records, contracts, and expenditures;

14 (b) Interview public officials, employees, or contractors; and

15 (c) Review policies, procedures, internal controls, and internal communications.

16 IV. Nothing in this section shall be construed to limit the grand jury's authority to
17 investigate additional entities or to issue findings and recommendations regarding the efficiency,
18 effectiveness, or integrity of public operations.

19 V. If, in the judgment of the grand jury, the services of professional auditors, investigators,
20 or other experts are necessary to carry out its duties under this section, the grand jury may retain
21 such individuals at a compensation to be agreed upon and approved by the superior court.

22 VI. If the county attorney, sheriff, or other public official declines to provide assistance
23 requested by the grand jury, the grand jury may independently retain personnel they deem
24 competent to perform the necessary investigative or technical functions.

25 VII. Any individual retained under this section shall have access to all records, documents,
26 and facilities that may be inspected by the grand jury, subject to the same confidentiality
27 requirements and limitations on public disclosure.

28 VIII. The grand jury may transmit its findings and recommendations to the public. The
29 costs of any services retained under this section shall be paid by the county, subject to approval by
30 the superior court.

31 600-C:4 Grand Jury Reports and Presentments.

32 I. All grand juries in this state shall have the authority and responsibility to issue
33 presentments, reports, and findings concerning any matter within its jurisdiction, including but not
34 limited to misuse or mismanagement of public funds, inefficiencies or failures in public
35 administration, and conditions requiring corrective legislation or policy reform.

36 II. The grand jury may submit such reports or presentments to the superior court and the
37 public at any time during its term of service.

1 III. Within 60 days of the issuance of any grand jury presentment, report, indictment, or
2 legislative recommendation, the county commissioners shall include the document on the agenda of a
3 public meeting for acknowledgment and discussion.

4 600-C:5 Review of Election and Tax Administration.

5 I. A grand jury convened under this chapter may investigate the administration and
6 integrity of voter registration and maintenance procedures conducted by municipal election officials
7 and property tax assessment and collection procedures conducted by county or municipal tax
8 authorities.

9 II. The grand jury may examine public records, interview officials, and issue presentments,
10 findings or recommendations regarding the accuracy and maintenance of vote checklists, compliance
11 with applicable election and tax laws, and the transparency and fairness of administrative
12 procedures.

13 600-C:6 Grand Jury Facilities.

14 The grand jury shall be housed within the county sheriff's department in a secure and
15 confidential space, separate from law enforcement operations. The superior court shall retain
16 supervisory authority over the grand jury.

17 600-B:7 Investigation of Corporate Misconduct.

18 The grand jury may investigate allegations of corruption, fraud, or other criminal wrongdoing
19 involving corporations or business entities operating within the county, particularly where such
20 conduct affects public funds, services, or the general welfare. The grand jury may issue
21 presentments, findings or recommendations to the superior court and the public.

22 600-C:8 Investigation of Professional Licensing Boards.

23 The grand jury may investigate allegations of fraud, abuse of authority, or other criminal
24 misconduct regarding professional boards under the office of profession licensure and certification,
25 as established in RSA 310:2. The grand jury may issue findings or recommendations to the superior
26 court and relevant public agencies, subject to applicable confidentiality laws.

27 600-C:9 Review of Financial Institutions Holding Public Funds.

28 The grand jury shall annually review at least one financial institution holding state or county
29 tax revenues, with a focus on potential fraud, mismanagement, or legal noncompliance. Subpoenas
30 for financial records may be issued pursuant to RSA 359-C:10, and findings may be reported to the
31 superior court, county commissioners, and the public.

32 600-C:10 Investigation of War Crimes.

33 The grand jury shall investigate any credible allegation that a state employee has committed
34 war crimes or violations of international humanitarian law while acting in an official capacity
35 outside of the United States. The grand jury may issue presentments, findings, and refer such
36 matters to the appropriate state or federal authorities for prosecution or further action.

37 600-C:11 Investigation of Federal Overreach.

1 The grand jury shall investigate any instance of overreach, abuse of authority, or unlawful
2 conduct by federal agencies or agents operating within the state of New Hampshire, particularly
3 where such conduct violates state law or infringes upon the rights of New Hampshire residents. The
4 grand jury may issue findings and refer matters to the attorney general or superior court.

5 600-C:12 Review of Sentencing Trends.

6 The grand jury may examine sentences handed down by federal, state, and local courts to assure
7 the public that all penalties are proportionate to the nature of the offense as required under part I,
8 article 18 of the New Hampshire constitution. If they deem that such a punishment is cruel and
9 unusual punishment they may recommend that the attorney general move the prisoner, or request
10 the federal government transfer said prisoner to state custody, into a more suitable environment to
11 improve chances of rehabilitation.

12 600-C:13 Independence of Grand Jury Investigations.

13 Nothing in this chapter shall restrict or restrain the regular grand juries from pursuing
14 investigations of their choosing and issuing presentments, findings, and recommendations to the
15 public.

16 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.