

LEGISLATIVE ALERT IV/79TH SESSION OF THE NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2017

The session enters its fifth week Monday, March 6. The fourth week was rather quiet, however there are over a thousand Bill Draft Requests on file, along with 238 Senate Bills and 253 Assembly Bills. We've already discussed two of the bills that are on file, AB 71 and SB 80. Neither bill has been scheduled for a hearing as yet, although SB 80 is exempt from the usual deadlines. Overall, RPEN's Lead Lobbyist Marlene Lockard is tracking over 30 bills, dealing with a variety of topics that impact public employees in one way or another. RPEN representatives, including Lockard and Executive Director Terri Laird, met Tuesday, February 28, for our weekly coalition gathering to discuss bills of joint consideration among this group that includes representatives from teachers, higher education, miscellaneous law enforcement, cities/counties, and unions like SEIU and AFSCME. Lockard chairs the discussion and so RPEN is an active participant. This is the same group that came together during the 2015 session to agree to bring forth an expert in the area of government pensions to testify on our behalf when Assembly Bill 190 was being heard. AB190, from then Assemblyman Randy Kirner, would have instituted a 401K/Hybrid Pension plan for new hires in PERS, and is eerily similar to AB 71 from Nevada State Controller Ron Knecht.

There are a few issues RPEN continues to follow although a bill has not been formally introduced as yet. One deals with personal, identifying information from public employees that could open this group up to identity theft. It stems from a bill in 2015, SB 356, from the late Senator Debbie Smith, and RPEN is hopeful Smith's successor Senator Julia Ratti will be able to carry that bill for us. We arranged a one-on-one meeting with Senator Ratti this week to discuss moving this bill forward, so stay tuned on that. The Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) has been subjected to two lawsuits in recent years from groups seeking access to this personal information. We are also hoping to continue efforts to solve the non-state orphan issue that has been percolating for years at the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP). This is a small group of non-state Medicare Retirees at PEBP who have faced escalating health insurance costs for years and unless the issue is addressed the scenario is going to get worse before it gets better. The PEBP Board begins their weekly meetings (on as as-needed basis) on Thursday, March 9, at 2:00 p.m. in their boardroom at the Richard Bryan Building in Carson City. PEBP has generally held weekly meetings during the legislative session to address bills they are following.

Another item of interest for week 5 includes an Assembly Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections hearing March 7 in Room 3142 in Carson City and Room 4401 of the Grant Sawyer Building in Las Vegas on Senate Joint Resolution 2, ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. It won approval 13-8 on the Senate Floor March 1 with Independent Senator Patricia Farley and Reno Republican Heidi Gansert voting for it, while the remaining Republicans voted against it. This represents the fourth time Nevada has tried to win ratification of the ERA before the state's legislature with previous attempts taking place in in 1973, 1975 and 1977.

We still encourage our members to sign in to the "Share Your Opinion" page at the Nevada Legislative website at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/Opinions/79th2017/A/> or contact your state representatives one-on-one either through in-person contact, email, phone call or letters to let them know your thoughts on the issues we are concerned with.

Terri Laird, Executive Director