

LEGISLATIVE ALERT IX
79TH SESSION OF THE NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE
FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2017

It's almost soup, but it's not soup yet! Those words were actually spoke Monday, April 10, during a hearing before the Nevada Senate Government Affairs Committee as it considered Senate Bill 502. SB 502 as introduced by Patrick Cates Monday, during the start of week 9 of the 79th Session of the Nevada State Legislature, seeks to bring the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) over to the Department of Administration along with Nevada Deferred Comp. It also seeks to remove one of the two retiree representatives on the PEBP Board that RPEN fought for and won during the 2013 Legislative Session. SB 502, a lengthy bill, would turn the PEBP Board into an advisory group only. As introduced, it also seeks to take the Quality Control Officer from reporting to the Board to reporting and governed by the Executive Officer. And SB 502, by taking the PEBP Board to an advisory position, gives the Department of Administration, and therefore the Governor, more power relating to bidding on contracts within PEBP. That is what the language of the bill, as introduced, includes.

But as previously mentioned, it's not "soup" yet! RPEN has been working with Cates, who also chairs the existing PEBP Board and is Director of the Department of Administration, along with other public employee representatives, to amend SB 502 into something that we can live with. The amendments were introduced by Cates at the hearing Monday, and he testified that he could live with most of the issues in the amendment. One important thing in the amendment is keeping TWO retiree reps on the PEBP Board. Another is keep PEBP's Board as a "Governing" Board. But Cates said there was no bargaining room for other changes the coalition wanted such as giving the Legislature a voice in who gets appointed to the PEBP Board. Currently the Governor approves all board appointments, at the recommendation of other

groups, like RPEN. Cates also testified he sees no room for negotiating his thoughts regarding the Quality Control Officer. There wasn't a lot of discussion from the Committee who has until Friday, April 14, to get the bill out of their Committee and to the Senate Floor for a vote! We will be watching and waiting, and there will likely be additional discussions taking place between Cates and the public employee groups he's negotiating with! There were several RPEN members in the audience both north and south for this important bill...including the former Executive Director of RPEN, Marty Bibb who returned from retirement to point out the importance of having two retiree representatives on the PEBP Board, something he brought forth in 2013 in the form of Assembly Bill 419.

Another bill RPEN is watching very closely, SB 384, our privacy bill being carried by Senate Julia Ratti of Sparks, was back before the Senate Government Affairs Committee Wednesday, April 5, for a work session. It was do-passed unanimously out of the Committee and is likely to be heard in the next day or two by the full Senate for a vote on the Senate floor. Once that occurs, the bill will move to the Assembly where the hearing process will begin again. That means we will need another show of support from our members, so stay tuned for another "Call to Action".

RPEN's public employee coalition continues to meet weekly, where our other bills are discussed. Thankfully, none of the controversial bills dealing with the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) have had hearings scheduled, so their status could be in jeopardy as the April 14 deadline to move bills out of committees of origin approaches. Bills that have fiscal notes attached are exempt from all deadlines.

The PERS bills we are tracking include Assembly Bill 71 and Senate Bill 297, both of which have very similar language to add a new 401K/Hybrid Pension Plan to the Nevada Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS). RPEN is opposed to AB 71 AND SB 297. Another PERS bill is SB 217 that would add a member from the private sector to the PERS Retirement Board. We are also opposed to SB 217.

As previously mentioned, the next deadline ahead for the full Legislature is April 14 when bills must pass out of their committee of origin. Budget closings will also begin this week as the Legislature reaches the halfway point before an anticipated June 5 sine die.

Keep in mind though, there is still plenty of time to register an opinion on any of the bills mentioned in this report. If you want to register an opinion on any of the bills mentioned in this alert, log into 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 or even Twitters (!) to let them know how you feel!

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