

LEGISLATIVE ALERT VI
79TH SESSION OF THE NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE
FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 2017

Week six of the 79th Legislative Session ended with yet another PERS reform bill coming out of the Senate from Minority Leader Michael Roberson. Senate Bill 297 essentially has much of the same language as Assembly Bill 71 from State Controller Ron Knecht. Both bills call for a hybrid/401K type of pension plan to be offered to all new employees with current employees also having the option of moving away from the current Defined Benefit plan. RPEN is opposed to both bills, because the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) has been subjected to several reform measures within the last few legislative sessions and we feel the system should be given the opportunity to fully realize the benefits of the past reform measures...before any new "reforms" are brought forth. Senator Roberson has another PERS bill, SB 217 that seeks to alter the make-up of the PERS Retirement Board by bringing on members from the private sector. A version of this bill was heard in 2015, under the name of Assembly Bill 3. The Hybrid/401K issue was also heard during the 2015 session, under the name of AB 190. PERS is tops among its' peers. A study ordered by Governor Sandoval several years ago found PERS "best in class". Why change something that is not broken?

Monday, March 20 is the deadline for Legislator's Bill Introductions, meaning it could be a long day for lawmakers scrambling to get their bills out for consideration. One such bill is RPEN's effort to get a privacy bill introduced similar to what the late Sparks Senator Debbie Smith tried to do in 2015. We are concerned with efforts from groups like the Nevada Policy Research Institute (NPRI) attempting to get more personal identifying information from PERS. We think the Nevada Statute governing privacy needs to be made clear as to what should be kept confidential in the face of rampant identity theft.

Confusion still abounds concerning Senate Bill 80 dealing with moving the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) and Deferred Comp to the Department of Administration. SB 80 was originally introduced, but apparently there is another bill set to take its' place with a few changes. RPEN is opposed to SB 80 in any form as we are concerned about transparency among other things. As of March 17

there are 322 bills filed so far in the Senate AND the Assembly, but again that number is likely to grow by the end of Monday.

In other news this week, it was revealed during the regular monthly meeting of the PERS Board March 16 that a Stay of Execution was issued by Carson District Judge James Wilson relating to his ruling favoring NPRI in its' recent lawsuit against PERS. The case was heard by the Judge in January and his decision is being appealed by PERS. There will be a closed "settlement" conference on March 24. We will let you know of the outcome once it's been released.

Meanwhile, RPEN continues to meet twice weekly now with our public employee coalition at the Legislative Building. There is strength in numbers within that group as well, as we assist each other in our common issues. The "Share Your Opinion" page at the legislative website has a new Number One Bill this week, Senate Bill 174 that seeks to change the name of McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas to Harry Reid International Airport, is the number 1 commented bill and as of March 17 there were 1,632 opinions posted, with only 30 favoring the change! AB 71 is in 5th place on the "Share Your Opinion" page with 502 opinions cast, 499 of them against the bill. SB 80 is in the 18th spot out of 50 bills listed on the page with 149 opinions posted, all against it.

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 (!) and let them know how you feel!

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