

LEGISLATIVE ALERT XVII
79TH SESSION OF THE NEVADA STATE LEGISLATURE
SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017

Well, it's almost over, keyword, "almost", and we have good news and bad news to report on the final Legislative Alert of this session.

We need to get the bad news out of the way first. Late in the afternoon June 3, word came from Governor Sandoval's office that he had vetoed RPEN's privacy bill, Senate Bill 384. RPEN had been trying to get legislative intervention since the 2015 session to clarify the Nevada Statutes as to what is and is not private and confidential information relating to retired public employees. SB 384 went through both houses on party line votes, and a last minute effort to amend the bill into something the Governor's Chief of Staff said the Governor would be willing to sign apparently didn't work. This is a great disappointment but the issue will be considered again later this month as the case of the Nevada Policy Research Institute (NPRI) versus the Nevada Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) will be heading on appeal before the Nevada Supreme Court.

Next, the good news. Another bill we've talked about throughout the session was Senate Bill 502, from the Department of Administration. SB 502 (dealing with the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) and Nevada Deferred Comp was signed by the Governor Friday. It is expected to become effective July 1, and will keep PEBP a governing board and will also keep two retirees on the PEBP Board.

Two other bills surfaced this week, SB 551 and SB 552. SB 551, known as the Subsidy Bill, establishes the 2017-2019 biennium subsidies to be paid to participants in PEBP, actives and retirees. SB 552 establishes a 4 year funding plan designed to offer relief to the PEBP "orphans" who are in a dwindling pool and subjected to escalating health care premiums. After the 4th year, local government will be expected to take over the funding plan. The Senate voted unanimously Saturday, June 3 to send both of these bills to the Assembly for their consideration which will be tomorrow (Sunday).

The last week of the session definitely started with a bang Monday, Memorial Day, though as a surprise hearing was called on Senate Bill 506, from Governor Brian Sandoval, seeking an appropriation of \$60 million for the Education Savings

Account (ESA). This one bill has long been rumored to be the #1 issue this session on which the entire state budget rests. It was the first hearing however, and led to a huge breakdown on a whole host of other budget issues yet to be resolved. It could be that SB 384 could be considered one of the many casualties of the fallout earlier in the week.

In other bad news this week, several collective bargaining bills RPEN had been watching as part of our public employee coalition haven't fared well either. Assembly Bill 290, SB 356 and SB 469 have all been vetoed by the Governor. Another, AB 290, which was a greatly condensed version of the other bills, has passed out of the Senate, but it was along party lines.

There still remains much to get done for lawmakers and time is definitely not on their side now. And while Governor Sandoval was quoted yesterday (Friday) as saying there "would NOT be a special session" time will tell if he can keep that promise.

As this will be our last Legislative Alert this session, we are hopeful to put together a special legislative issue of The RPEN Review later this month. It takes roughly three weeks to get the newsletter together, printed and mailed, so stay tuned, hopefully, for an information packed newsletter to come. Until then, be sure to check our website and Facebook page for the latest legislative information that is ahead over the next few days.

We tried our best with the privacy bill, and in my opinion, we have nothing to be ashamed of. It was an uphill battle for sure, but battle we did, and while it didn't go our way, at least we gave it a good fight. We had a lot of support through our public employee coalition as well as many lawmakers who also did their best. But it all got caught up in the ESA crossfire and who knows where all of that will lead?

Terri Laird, Executive Director