

LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP

June 6, 2017

BILLS

PERS RELATED

SB 384

This was our Privacy Bill carried for us by Sparks Senator Julia Ratti, who took over essentially what the late Senator Debbie Smith started during the 2015 Legislative Session when the issue was never heard by the legislature at that time. It was different this go around though, the bill made it through both houses, along party lines, which in this session with the veto power held by Governor Sandoval, was the kiss of death since he reportedly said he would not sign bills sent to him that were partisan. And so, SB 384 was vetoed on Saturday, June 3, and now we will have to wait while the latest lawsuit against PERS from the Nevada Policy Research Institute (NPRI) makes its way to the Nevada Supreme Court later this month. Judge Wilson in late January ruled in favor of NPRI, determining that PERS must comply with his order and produce the following information: Retiree Name; Years of Service Credit; Gross Pension Benefit Amount; Year of Retirement AND Last Employer.

Had SB 384 gone through, it would have made the following information public; Name, Pension and Last Employer. That was how the bill read in its original form but it was later amended by Senator Ratti to delete Name, and in its place insert an "Identifying Number". However, the bill was amended again late in the session once we received information from the Governor's office that he would only consider signing SB 384 if it included a NAME and not an IDENTIFYING NUMBER and so the bill, as approved and enrolled, reverted back to NAME, instead of identifying number.

PEBP RELATED

SB 502

This bill started out as Senate Bill 80, and sought to drastically change the Public Employees' Benefits Program (PEBP) by removing one of the two retiree representatives on the PEBP Board RPEN fought for and won at the 2013 Legislative Session...and SB 80 also sought to take the PEBP from a governing agency to an advisory agency. SB 80 later morphed into SB 502, leaving SB 80 to die in the first round of bill deadlines. SB 502 was originally opposed by RPEN although mid-session Marlene and Priscilla Maloney from AFSCME and Dr. Kent Ervin from the Nevada Faculty Alliance, spent a weekend working closely with the Bill Sponsor, Patrick Cates, who also chairs the current PEBP Board...and they all crafted what Marlene liked to call "our" bill when all was said and done. As passed, SB 502 keeps both retiree reps on the PEBP Board and also keeps PEBP as a governing board, while still keeping the RFP process, that got PEBP and Deferred Comp (who was also a part of SB 502) into some trouble in the last couple of years, within the Dept. of Administration's jurisdiction. The Governor signed it June 1 and it essentially takes effect immediately.

SB 551

Traditionally called the “Subsidy Bill” this comes before the Legislature every session as it sets the amounts to be paid actives and retirees for their health care premiums through PEBP and the Medicare Exchange. Retirees still participating in PEBP will receive \$445.03 per month the first year (2017-18) and \$451.23 per month the 2nd year of the biennium (2018-19) with this money coming from the State or local government from which they retired.

Those retirees in the Medicare Exchange who retired before January 1, 1994 will receive \$180 per month for both fiscal years and those who retired ON or AFTER January 1, 1994 will receive \$12 per month per year of service up to 20 years, up to a maximum of \$240 per month in both fiscal years.

SB 552

This bill was brought forth by RPEN and other of our coalition members for those non-state retired participants in PEBP who have faced escalating health care premiums because of the dwindling pool they are in as the state shut the door in 2007 to non-state participants in PEBP unless all of the actives came along with the retirees. That left this group isolated in an ever shrinking pool, some subjected to premium increases in excess of 500% year over year. SB 552 sets up a four year plan with the state paying the money to bring this group in line with their active non-state counterparts (only nine of them). In year one, the state will cover it all, year 2 they'll cover 75% of it, year 3 50% and in the 4th and final year the state's obligation will be down to 25%, with the local governments expected to cover all of that funding after year four. Funding for this will be within one of the budget closing bills and amount to over 40 million dollars.

Both SB 551 and SB 552 have been approved and signed by the Governor and will take effect July 1. SB 551 received a unanimous vote from the Senate and Assembly, while SB 552 was approved unanimously in the Senate and received 4 NAY votes in the Assembly from Lisa Krasner from Reno, John Ellison from Elko and Jim Marchant and Richard McArthur from Las Vegas.

In addition to these four bills, we also testified on several miscellaneous bills relating to guardianship issues, other identity theft matters and Marlene went to the table as well to support a few collective bargaining bills that sought to correct some unintended consequences of a bill passed in 2015. Unfortunately, most of the collective bargaining bills, including the last minute bill, Assembly Bill 290 that was a last minute effort to put in language allowing leaders to bargain on company time, which was the only issue addressed in that bill, were vetoed by the Governor.

In all there were 524 bills considered in the Assembly, 560 in the Senate. On the share your opinion page SB 384 was the 24th out of 50 most commented on bills there, SB 502 was in 26th place out of 50, and the 2nd most commented bill there was renaming McCarran Airport in LV to Harry Reid International Airport.

We want to thank ALL of our chapters for your participation in our Call to Action Alerts, when we sent them out requesting an audience for a hearing on one of our bills...as well as thanks to many of you who may have went to the Share Your Opinion page. We are also grateful for the public employee coalition that we worked so closely with on many of our “shared” interests. All in all, the 79th Session accomplished some big things for RPEN; shedding light on the identity theft concerns of too much personal, identifying information being made available to the general public, even if SB 384 didn't go our way, we brought it to the forefront of the Legislature. Another longstanding issue we had high hopes of solving did go through, in the form of SB 552, giving hope to the non-state “orphans” participating in PEBP who've faced escalating health care premiums

due to their dwindling pool, and we thank the Legislature along with our partners in our coalition who worked collectively to make that one happen this session!