

Legislative Update June 5th

Tick Tick Tick Tick Tick . . .

Is that the sound of the clock winding down . . . or the 79th session of the Nevada Legislature about to blow up . . . again?

Today is *the* day – the last day. At midnight tonight, the session comes to an end. What gets done is done, and what doesn't, well, there's always 2019.

That ticking sound appears it is indeed the clock winding down on this session.

Last minute deals on end game policy and budget issues were resolved late Sunday night in the Senate that ensure a balanced budget. The bills the Senate approved last night move to the Assembly today for passage by that house.

The deal: Education Savings Accounts, which Republicans vowed to fund this session – or else – are dead. No deal. As a small concession to Republicans, Democrats passed a bill (Senate Bill 555) that provides \$20 million in one-shot funding for the Opportunity Scholarship Program, a tax credit program whereby businesses donate funds that in turn are awarded to families earning up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level. Up to \$7,700 is awarded per child. All four caucus leaders sponsored SB555.

In return, three Republicans joined every Democrat in voting for the lone budget bill that hadn't cleared both houses and been sent to the Governor, the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) bill (Senate Bill 546). The bill failed to garner the two-thirds majority on party lines when voted on by the Senate last week (mea culpa #2: I incorrectly reported all five budget bills required two-thirds majorities when in fact only this budget bill does). Passing the CIP bill is essential to balancing the budget and ensuring the state's bond rating because it's tied in part to property taxes. One Assembly Republican will need to join Democrats to ensure passage in the lower house today.

Lastly, the bill that would tax on retail recreational marijuana (Senate Bill 487) was revived and imposes the tax at the rate of 10 percent. It's expected to generate approximately \$60 million in revenue each year of the next biennium. This revenue was counted on to help fund K-12 education. When the bill "died" last week, Democrats used the \$60 million for ESAs from the Governor's recommended budget to fill the gap in the K-12 budget. The revenue from this tax will go to the state's Rainy Day Fund.

While it appears to be smooth sailing until it's time to sine die, there are still outstanding issues. One is a major piece of energy legislation (Assembly Bill 206) to increase the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard requirements for electricity generation. Senate Bill 539, a drug transparency bill that seeks to shed light on Pharmacy Benefit Managers, is expected to move as well. It became part of the game when the Governor vetoed Senate Bill 265, which would require diabetes drug manufacturers to disclose costs to bring the drugs to market. The provisions from SB265 will be amended into SB539 in their entirety.

Call to Action –Sex Education

Assembly Bill 348 passed the Senate on a party line vote and is headed to the Governor's office. Please email the Governor's Chief of Staff (mwlliden@gov.nv.gov) to let him know AB348 is important legislation for our health centers and a necessary complement to the NVPCA's Teen Pregnancy Program.

The Week That Was

Family Planning Funding and Women's Healthcare: Funding for the family planning services has been sent to the Governor when the Senate passed Assembly Bill 397, which would provide \$500,000 each year of the next biennium.

Senate Bill 233, which would put into state law women's health care provisions from the Affordable Care Act plus provide for the 12-month prescribing and dispensing of birth control, was signed by the Governor.

Assembly Bill 249, which proposes to allow for 12 month prescribing and dispensing of birth control only, may not be processed since SB233 was signed into law.

Collaborative Practice of Pharmacy: Senate Bill 260 was concurred in by the Senate and is headed to the Governor.

Medicaid Coverage as a Public Option: Assembly Bill 374 would create the Nevada Care Plan, which would mirror Medicaid health insurance coverage and be offered to Nevadans who aren't eligible for Medicaid. Passed the Senate on a party line vote and is headed to the Governor.

Obesity and BMI: Senate Bill 165 would reinstitute BMI in school districts in certain grades was signed by the Governor.

Psychology assistants, interns and trainees: Senate Bill 162 was concurred in by the Senate and has been sent to the Governor.

For a complete update on all bills the NVPCA is tracking, please see the updated bill tracking document.