



2017 Legislative Update **Week #7 (Final Update)**

The 2017 Utah Legislative Session ended Thursday March 9th at midnight.

As in past years we maintained a daily presence at the Capitol throughout. There were numerous external events (record snow, flooding, and the passing of 3 IAFF members) that made it impossible for me to physically be there every day as in most sessions. We were however able to take care of our business at hand between myself, Marty Peterson, David Larsen, Tony Allred, and our great team at Sego Strategies.

Our weekly PFFU Huddle schedule had to be modified, and therefore we were only able to hold 4 during the session. This proved to be acceptable based on the fact we didn't have any bills that required a call to action. We appreciate the PFFU members that were consistent faces on the hill, to include attending huddles; Val Thometz of L81, David Larsen of L4080, Gordon Flinders of L5077, PFFU S/T Susan Davis, and PFFU DVP's Tony Allred, Zack Hatch, and Steve Quinn.

We tracked 32 bills and issues actively throughout the session. Several as you will notice, will go to the Interim Session as priorities. Some were bills that did not pass out for a variety of reasons or had open bill files and the language will be worked on prior to next session.

SB 18 (Mayne): Firefighters' Disability Retirement Benefit Amendments. This was our bill in conjunction with URS. Defines the difference between a Line of Duty disability vs a Non-Line of Duty (so all parties can determine whether the disability is a Utah Retirement System claim or a Workers Compensation carrier claim. Most employers have had no idea how to properly guide their employees in the correct direction). Standardizes disability benefits between T1 & T2 (drops the 24 month max for LTD). We supported, bill passed.

SB 30SO3 (Bramble): Insurance Premium Tax Amendments. This bill had 2 parts. One part to appropriate the money owed that is contributed to our pension from fire premium taxes within homeowners insurance policies. That component was not questioned by the legislature. The other part was to propose a new formula to determine what that amount

will be beginning in 2 years. That part was not what Marty Peterson and I desired, however we were not in a position to posture too much on. That became irrelevant as even though it passed the Senate, the House stalled it where it died, due to what they felt was still too large of a fiscal note. This bill has been worked on since last July. The Utah State Tax Commissioner, the Utah State Fire Marshal and the bill sponsor have rightfully had to be the leads on this (this money goes from the tax commission, through the Fire Marshal's budget to fund his budget, UFRA, and the earlier mentioned part of our pension). Marty and I have watch dogged this and given a lot of input and opinion throughout the process. We have been patient, but my patience is almost to the end on this issue. In speaking with Senator Bramble on Thursday (last day of the session) he understands our frustration, and commits to this being fixed during the Interim Session. At our upcoming PFFU Convention we will present more to you on this project. We supported, bill failed.

On a happier note....we did kill an Anti-Labor bill.

SB 176 (Weiler): Public Transit Authority Collective Bargaining Amendments. This bill would have prohibited the supervisory group of the UTA (44 personnel) from voting to join a union. There are a few twists to this story, but the bottom line is that the goal was to union bust an organization, which is bad for all of organized labor. Therefore, in conjunction with Senator Karen Mayne we as the Utah One Coalition collectively killed the bill before it went anywhere. We opposed, bill failed.

SB 37 (Thatcher): Statewide Crisis Line. Original intent was to create the nation's first 611 line for the general public. The bill's primary focus was amended to establish a commission that will be charged with establishing the statewide crisis line for the general public. We supported, bill passed.

SB 200 (Thatcher): Law Enforcement & Firefighter Peer Counseling Amendments. This bill was designed to provide confidentiality protections to Peer Support Team members. The bill was stalled, and died. Several states (Colorado & Washington among them) have this law in place. However the Utah A.G.'s office and the Supreme Court have issues with "Rules of Evidence", and "Protected Privilege" components. They believe the bill language may be too generous in those areas. Both are still working through their concerns with the sponsor. Mike Fox of L81 and David Larsen of L4080 have agreed to work with Senator Thatcher on the project as it moves forward. We supported, bill failed. Sent to Interim Study.

SB 14 (Harper): Telephone Service Amendments. Requires multi-line phone systems to identify the exact location of the phone used to make a 911 call. We supported, bill passed.

SB 198SO3 (Harper): Utah Communications Authority. Appropriated funds to continue operations, and reduce the UCA Board from 27 members down to a more workable 9 members. Encourage your administrations to become more educated and engaged regarding the UCA. We supported, bill passed.

HB 229 (McCay): Amendments Relating to Local Districts. Amends how municipalities or areas enter into and exit from a special service district (by council vote instead of a public vote). Establishes rules for conducting feasibility studies to support entry and exit of a district. Since our locals that represent districts were split on this we focused on consistency (methodology) from entry to exit, and allowable timelines to exit a district. The feasibility studies and their exhausting parameters should address those concerns. If they do not, we will approach the sponsor to amend his bill in the future. We supported (watching close), bill passed.

HB 234 (Redd): Post-Exposure Blood Testing Amendments. Technical Amendments to the sponsor's HB 68 from the 2016 session. We supported, bill passed.

HB 138 (Redd): Public Safety Amendments. Amends who is included in regards to custodial sexual relations. We supported, bill passed.

HB 81SO1 (Greene): Post Employment Restrictive Covenant Amendments. We opposed, bill died.

HB 96 (Eliason): Petroleum Vapor Recovery Amendments. Increases the fines for failing to conduct vapor recovery during loading/off loading of bulk petroleum products. We supported, bill passed.

HB 161 (Eliason): Pedestrian Safety Amendments. Establishes stricter laws against panhandling and encourages better enforcement of those laws. Should have little or no effect on our current MDA Fill the Boot events. We supported, bill passed.

HB 227 (Gardiner): EMS System Amendments. Changes the term certification to license for 911 dispatch personnel. We supported, bill passed.

HB 261SO1 (Sagers): Local Emergency response Amendments. Makes changes to the EMS Committee make up. No real effect to us. Watched, bill passed.

HB 263 (Sagers): Urban Search & Rescue. Intent was to create a Type 3 USAR TF. Watched, bill died.

HB 229 (Redd): Mental Health Response Civil Commitment. Would have changed definitions and some responsibilities for some facilities and personnel in regards to mental health patient responses. We supported, bill died (ran out of time). Sent to Interim Study.

SB 19 (Dayton): Retirement Systems Payments to Survivors Amendments.

The most interesting component of this bill is the possible revocation of ex-spouses as a beneficiary. Take a look at the bill language, because it could depend on which side of the tracks you are on as to whether you like it or not. We supported (watched closely because of the sponsor), bill passed.

SB 20 & 21SO1 (Hemmert): Phased & Regular Retirement Amendments. Technical amendments. We supported, both bills passed.

SB 156SO3 (Weiler): Local PSO & Firefighter Surviving Spouse Trust Fund Amendments. Establishes more formal criteria for the funding of the benefit under existing statute, which was originally passed in 2015 as our HB 288 (Ray). This bill had to be amended to its current form before it met our approval. We supported, bill passed.

SCR 1 (Weiler): Resolution on Increasing Pay for Certain Public Safety Officers & Firefighters. Nice gesture. Amounts to nothing.

We will discuss this SCR and reactions/comments to it at the PFFU Convention.

There are 3 more issues that had bill files opened for us in the event we could or needed to move on them. All 3 are priority issues for us and will be in Interim Study.

Firefighter Presumptive Cancer (Mayne). Our goal was to add 4 more cancers to our existing coverage from passage in 2015 of SB 135. We could not move on it right now due to 2 major issues going on within the workers compensation industry. It was/is to our advantage to allow those issues to be fixed before we move on adding more cancers. It will happen.

Ambulance Transfers of Mental Health Patients (Redd). DVP Targee Williams and L2148 President Nate Thompson have taken the lead on addressing changes to Inter Facility transports of mental health patients to ease staffing issues. It is believed it can be addressed in existing law and BEMS rules/policies. Rep. Redd opened the bill file for us in the event it was needed.

PTSD Continuum of Care for Firefighters, EMS Responders, and Law Enf. (Kwan). This bill mandates employers provide a standardized level and amount of PTSD treatment/therapy. Currently every health insurance carrier provides different levels. We have PEHP on board with our plan, but must secure the other carriers. This does (will) have a large fiscal note. We are confident to run it next year.

For additional information on bills visit the "Utah Legislature" website.

Fraternally,

Jack Tidrow, President