Connecticut Legislative Update
MAY 2019

Issues Update:
With time running out in the 2019 session, which ends at midnight on June 5, several important bills still remain on the legislature’s agenda. Though major measures such as minimum wage and increased gun restriction have passed in recent weeks, paid family medical leave and the state budget have not been finalized.

Senate Bill 1 An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave passed out of the Senate on May 22, despite the Governor’s repeated threats of vetoing the bill. The bill, which establishes a 12-week leave for medical issues or family care, would be financed by a 0.5% payroll tax and is not optional. While Lamont supports the bill in concept, he is opposed to provisions regarding the board makeup and resource allocation.

LDAC has submitted testimony opposing paid family medical leave, which would burden businesses with administrative costs (such as recordkeeping and implementing/monitoring payroll deductions). The bill would force employers to continue to pay non-wage benefits, including healthcare, during the 12 weeks.

The building materials industry prides itself on meeting customers’ needs and being responsive to their projects—all while operating on small margins. Any additional burden that is thrust upon small business leads to higher prices for our products. This in turn increases the cost of all construction, residential, and commercial projects in the private and public sector.

SB 1 puts an excessive burden on our small businesses. The proposed legislation will drive up the cost of all construction and reduce job creation opportunities for our companies. This hurts the employer and, ultimately, the employee whom this proposal seeks to protect. SB 1’s fate in the House of Representatives is unclear. It is possible that the session ends before it gets voted on—or, if it does end up being voted on in its current form, that the Governor vetoes the bill.

The Speaker of the House, Joe Aresimowicz, has vocalized that larger issues like paid family medical leave are on the backburner, as the legislature hopes to finalize the state budget before the end of session. While the budget is currently the legislature’s top priority, there is disagreement over the details of the tax policy and spending plan. Lamont’s budget relies heavily on expanding the sales tax to additional items and services without raising the 6.35% rate.

Other outstanding issues include on-call shift scheduling, recreational marijuana, public option for healthcare and mandatory vaccinations. The tolls issue—another key part of Lamont’s legislative agenda and a measure which Republicans have unanimously opposed—is likely on pause. Both Governor Lamont and the Speaker have said that tolls will probably be taken up during a special session this summer.

As time dwindles, legislators will continue working tirelessly in the House and Senate over the next few days to check more items off a very ambitious legislative agenda.

Questions?
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