**Vermont Legislative Update**

FEBRUARY 2019

**Issues Update:**

**Paid Family Leave, H. 107**

Things have changed since last year, now that the Governor no longer has the likely ability to sustain a veto in the Legislature. Last year, Paid Family, H.196, was vetoed by the Governor. It had a 6 week benefit at 70% of salary, with no employer pay-in. It was funded by a tax on employees. Now, various versions are wending their way through the House----H.107 has passed out of General Housing and Military Affairs Committee with 12 weeks at 100%, paid for by a tax on both employers and employees. This bill is being considered now by Ways & Means.

The Governor’s new plan is to work with New Hampshire to provide a voluntary program, with the combined state employees in both states forming the backbone of the program (it would not be voluntary for state employees).

Given the veto of H.196 last year, and the movement of H.107, AND the changes in the New Hampshire legislature to Democratic control, it is unlikely that the Governor’s plan will move forward.

Members are asked to let your legislative committee know your concerns about paid family leave.

**Minimum Wage, S. 23**

Last year, Governor Scott vetoed minimum wage increases in S.40. As noted above, this year is different. The Senate voted this week 19-8 to approve S.23 which sets a course for Vermont to mandate a $15 per hour minimum wage by 2024.

The as passed bill will study student and tipped wages, perhaps allowing employers to hire students at less than the minimum wage.

**Workforce Development**

With the likely changes in family leave and the minimum wage, VRLDA members may face increasing difficulty in hiring and retaining good employees.

With this in mind, your Board of Directors is meeting with Labor Commissioner Lindsay Kurrle at our meeting on March 12. Your input to this discussion would be appreciated.

**Rain Rule/Overwidth-Overweight Permits**

Last year, rules were revised to more closely follow standard practice in adjoining states. How is this working for your business? Please let us know. As far as municipal overweight permits are concerned, this remains an issue. VRLDA should work with the League of Cities and Towns to obtain a clearinghouse for municipal permitting.

**Carbon Tax-may be dead but stay tuned!**

**Events:**

VRLDA members will host their annual legislative reception on March 12th at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier, Vt. Members will discuss their priority issues with legislators, such as paid family leave, the minimum wage increase, workforce development, and advocating for low prices and availability of building supplies.

**Questions?**

Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Government Affairs at 518-880-6376 or kives@nrla.org.