Vermont Legislative Update
MAY 2019

The following report is from VRLDA Lobbyist, Bill Smith of Smith Government Relations, LLC.

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Did You Know?
The average yearly salary is $47,473 in the lumber and building materials industry in Vt.

Issues Update:
Paid Family Leave, H. 107-Put off until 2020
As noted in past editions of this update, there were significant differences between the House and Senate versions of Paid Family Leave.

The House version would have included 12 weeks of leave with a .55% payroll tax on employees only, while the Senate modified that to 6 weeks and .2% payroll tax to be split between employees and employers. The cost: $76 million for the House proposal and $29 million for the Senate’s version.

At the end of session this year, the House and Senate could not agree, and ran out of time to pass the bill this year. In the second year of the biennium, starting in January, it will be taken up as a top priority of the Democrat controlled Vermont Legislature.

Minimum Wage, S. 23-Put off until 2020
What was said above, is exactly the same situation for the Minimum Wage bill. It will have to wait until January.

The Senate passed version would have increased the state’s minimum wage to $15 an hour by 2024. The House proposed an amendment that would have phased-in increases more slowly, hitting $15 in 2026. This was unacceptable to the Senate in the closing weeks of session this year.

Workforce Development Bill Passes H.533
In April, the House of Representatives passed H.533, with the following components: addressing recruiting and relocation of workers; expanding training for weatherization coordinators; designating training funds to small businesses; studying adult career and technical education; and appropriating funding for worker recruitment marketing. In early May, the Senate passed a slightly different version, but a conference committee successfully ironed out its differences at end of session.

In relevant part to the retail building supply industry, the passed version requires the Department of Labor to increase training opportunities for individuals interested in becoming employed in the home or commercial weatherization industry, providing stipends and wage subsidies for training participants.

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