

## FASP LEGISLATIVE REPORT - April 9, 2020



The past few months have been productive with the potential created to see some legislative victories in the near future. With both the House and Senate introducing and moving SR 6 related bills in the fall of 2019 and into the winter and spring of 2020, we now see some key pieces of legislation from the House over in the Senate (and vice versa) which are ready to be considered.

Normally, right now (April/May) is the time when legislative leaders in both the House and Senate determine what legislative issue will be considered along with the annual budget process which unfolds in June.

This usual process has been derailed by the unexpected COVID-19 world pandemic that has taken center stage. Luckily, there seems to be a recognition within the Pennsylvania state legislature of the importance of emergency services.

Proof of this was displayed by some of the SR 6 bills seeing movement during the first historic days of our legislature voting "online" while under a social distancing quarantine.

Legislation has also been introduced to help with crisis grants for VFD's as well as paycheck protection for some groups of emergency responders.

While we are in uncharted waters, because of the strong legislative effort that was put forward, resulting with so many bills now being in a good position for final passage and/or further movement, it is likely that we could see a few of these bills get to the Governor's desk in spite of the COVID-19 situation.

### **Status of SR 6 Legislation (as of April 9, 2020)**

Passed by the House, passed out of referred Senate committee, and on Senate floor awaiting consideration by the full Senate (*once voted on by the full Senate they will go back to the House for concurrence and then to the Gov's desk for signature*):

- HB 1869- Owlett- Ambulance staffing waiver

- HB 1522- Ecker- Amends the Child Labor Act, further providing for minors serving in volunteer emergency service organizations

Passed by House, passed out of referred Senate committee, and in Senate Appropriations committee awaiting fiscal review (*once voted out of Senate Appropriations this bill will be in the position to be voted on final passage by the full Senate; once voted on by full Senate this goes to the Gov's desk for signature*):

- HB 732- Quinn- provide an exemption from the Realty Transfer Tax for volunteer service providers.

Passed out of Senate referred committee, considered on Senate floor and in Senate Appropriations committee awaiting fiscal review (*once voted out of Senate Appropriations these Senate bills will be in the position to be voted on final passage by the full Senate and will then be sent to the House*):

- SB 331- Brooks- Amends the Public School Code, in terms and courses of study, further providing for firefighter and emergency service training and establishing the Fire Training Fund
- SB 987 - Hutchinson -Restructuring of the OSFC
- SB 932 - Boscola - Amends Title 35 (Health and Safety), in volunteer firefighters, further providing for definitions (VRFA's)

Passed by the full Senate and awaiting committee action in the House (*these Senate bills will need to be considered by the noted House committee and then House floor*):

- SB 94- Martin- This legislation would ensure workers' compensation coverage for all active duty Volunteer Firefighters, Fire, Police, officers or directors of a Volunteer Fire Company, and integral members of a volunteer fire company if injured in the performance of their duties. (*House Labor and Industry Committee*)
- SB 908- Regan- Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety), in volunteer firefighters for funds and for audits and providing for fire relief formula study. (*House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness (VA&EP)*)
- SB 910- Mastriano- Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety), in grants to fire & EMS companies establishing award of grants, for Grant Program, additional funding, & expiration of authority. (*House VA&EP*)

Bills passed out of House committee, considered on the House floor and in House Appropriations committee for fiscal review (*once voted out of House Appropriations this bill will be in the position to be voted on final passage by the full House*):

- HB 1189 - Knowles - Amends the Tax Reform Code, providing for volunteer emergency responders employer tax credit

Passed by the full House and now in the Senate Transportation committee:

- HB 1758- Ortity- exempts both volunteer fire and EMS companies from the payment of PSP accident report fee; adds both to municipal police

Passed by the full House of Representatives and are now in the Senate VA&EP committee:

- HB 1448- Sturla- voter referendum to expand loan assistance
- HB 1834- Sainato- Extends and expands grant for recruitment and retention
- HB 1838- Causer- Increase funding for EMSOF
- HB 1673- Farry- Volunteer Firefighters Length of Service Award Program
- HB 1773- Struzzi- First responder tuition assistance
- HB 1816- Schlegel-Culver- Increase VLAP loan Limits
- HB 1839- Brooks- Tax credits for volunteer first responders
- HB 1705- Gabler,M- Title 35/ tax credits for volunteer first responder
- HB 1459- Schlossberg- establishes a mental wellness and stress management protocol within the PA Department of Health

Passed by the full House and in Senate Finance committee:

- HB 269- Driscoll- provide an exemption from the Realty Transfer Tax for the surviving spouse/children of a first responder

Passed by the full House and in Senate Education Committee:

- HB 1786- Sainato- First Responder Loan Forgiveness Program

Bills passed by the full House and in Senate State Government Committee:

- HB 1780- James, R- Title 35/ volunteer fire/EMS companies and the Right-to-Know Law (exempts from RTKL)

**Status of COVID-19 Legislation (as of April 9, 2020)**

HB 2374 - Rep. Snyder (D-Greene) - Amends Title 35 (Health & Safety), in grants to fire companies & emergency medical services companies, providing for COVID-19 Crisis Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program

- Introduced 4/6 - in House VA&EP Committee
- Crisis grant legislation will also be introduced in the near future by Rep. Cris Dush (R-Jefferson), Senator's Pittman (R- Indiana) and Bartolotta (R-Washington), and Senator Brewster (D-Allegheny)

SB 1106 - Senator Mike Regan (R- Cumberland) Amends the Enforcement Officer Disability Benefits Law (Heart and Lung Act), further providing for disability benefits

- Introduced 4/6 - voted out of Senate VA&EP Committee on 4/7
- Disability benefit legislation will also be introduced in the near future by Rep. Eric Nelson (D- Philadelphia)