In Review

Under the Dome delivers a review of the recent issues being considered by the 83rd Legislature during its Second Session and provides information on matters under consideration that affect WVU and higher education.

Campus Carry

House Bill 4298 was introduced last week by several members of the House of Delegates. It would prohibit our Board of Governors, except in three defined instances, from banning individuals with a concealed weapon permit from carrying a concealed weapon on our campuses or in our buildings. We note that current law authorizes the Board of Governors and administration to make those decisions.

Under the proposed legislation, the only instances in which the Board of Governors could prohibit concealed weapons on campus would be in: (1) a stadium or arena with a capacity of more than 5,000 spectators; (2) a day care facility located on the property of the State institution of higher education; or (3) in the secure area of any building used by a law enforcement agency on the property of the State institution for higher education.

University leadership has several concerns with the bill and believes the decision on these issues pertaining to our WVU System should reside with our Board of Governors. Our University government relations team is engaged with the Legislature on this issue and will continue to advocate for the best interests of the University.

Governor Tomblin’s Official Portrait

On Friday, the State unveiled the official portrait of Governor Earl Ray Tomblin. Tomblin served as the 35th governor from 2011 to 2017. He was elected to the House of Delegates in 1974 at the age of 22. Governor Tomblin also served in the State Senate from 1980-2011, presiding as Senate President for almost 17 years.

Naijun Zhang, associate professor of painting at West Virginia University, was the artist who painted the official portrait and was at the Capitol for the ceremony.

PEIA and Pay Raises

During his State of the State address, Governor Justice proposed a pay raise for State employees, including teachers and school service personnel, of 1% each year for five years. The bill (SB 267) passed the Senate on Friday and goes to the House for consideration.

In recent days, the issue has gained statewide attention, as teachers call for additional increases in pay and continue to have concerns about rising costs of PEIA and the Go365 program.

The PEIA Finance Board has announced three upcoming public hearings to discuss proposed changes to insurance coverage.
• February 12 – Charleston
• February 13 – Morgantown
• February 14 – Beckley

The board will then meet on February 20 to consider action on any proposals.

**Bill Tracking**

More than 1,400 bills have been introduced at the Capitol this legislative session. Some of the bills that are gaining high-profile attention or relate to WVU and higher education include:

**SJR 9 (HJR 106)** – Just Cut Taxes and Win Amendment

**SB 83** – Relating to Higher Education Student Success

**SB 111** – Enacting Forming Open and Robust University Minds Act

**SB 152 (HB 4019)** – Budget Bill

**SB 269 (HB 4154)** – Establishing 2018 Regulatory Reform Package

**SB 284 (HB 4267)** – Increasing Access to Career Education and Workforce Training

**SB 287 (HB 4170)** – Creating and Maintaining Centralized State Vehicle Inventory System

**SB 330** – Relating to Exemptions from Mandated Immunizations

**SB 341** – Creating an Intermediate Court of Appeals

**SB 415 (HB 4396)** – Permitting Wagering on the Results of Certain Professional or Collegiate Sports or Athletic Events

**HJR 103** – Election of West Virginia Board of Education Members Amendment

**HB 2335** – Protecting Academic Freedom in Higher Education

**HB 2887** – Relating to Retirement and Separation Incentives

**HB 3001** – Abolishing the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

**HB 3045/HB 4344** – Modifying the Tax on Soft Drinks to Only Cover Sugary Drinks/Relating to the Tax on Soft Drinks

**HB 4002** – Providing That All Delegates Shall Be Elected from 100 Single Member Districts Following the 2020 U.S. Census

**HB 4198** – Adding One Additional Magistrate to Serve Monongalia County

**HB 4203** – Campus Free Speech Act

**HB 4268** – Co-tenancy Modernization and Majority Protection Act

**HB 4298** – Campus Self-Defense Act

For questions or more information, contact Travis Mollohan, director, State and Local Relations, email: tmolloh1@mail.wvu.edu; phone: 304-400-4963

WVU is an EEO/Affirmative Action Employer. Under-represented class members are encouraged to apply. This includes minorities, females, individuals with disabilities and veterans.
HB 4311 – Making All Work Product by State Government to Be in the Public Domain and Not Subject to Copyright Protection

HB 4374 – Independent Evaluation of Revenue Estimates by West Virginia and Marshall Universities’ Business Colleges

To review bills that have been introduced, please visit this link. wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bill_status.cfm

Legislative Calendar and Important Dates

30th Day of Session (Halfway Point) February 8, 2018
Last Day to Introduce Bills in the House February 13, 2018
Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol February 16, 2018
Last Day to Introduce Bills in the Senate February 19, 2018
WVU and WVU Extension Day at the Capitol February 20, 2018
Bills Due Out of Committee in Chamber of Origin February 25, 2018
Last Day to Consider a Bill on Third Reading February 28, 2018
Last Day of Regular Session March 10, 2018

WVU at the State Capitol

Travis Mollohan and Rocco Fucillo, both from WVU’s State and Local Relations team, represent WVU at the State Capitol during the legislative session. They can answer questions about any issues addressed by the Legislature. Contact info: Travis Mollohan (tmolloh1@mail.wvu.edu) or Rocco Fucillo (rsfucillo@mail.wvu.edu).

More Information

To learn more about the Legislature, including district maps, bill tracking, committee assignments and a summary of legislative activities, please visit wvlegislature.gov. You may also find contact information for your legislators on that website.

To learn more about WVU’s legislative initiatives, please visit governmentrelations.wvu.edu.