

Capitol Update

By Bill Chapman



Bill Chapman is the CBA's legislative lobbyist and government affairs administrator. Follow Bill on Twitter @CTBarLeg



The 2017 Legislative Session began on Wednesday, January 4 at 10 a.m. and will end at midnight on Wednesday, June 7. This year's session brings us incredible changes to the legislative landscape in Connecticut. We have a republican president. We have a governor that is likely in his last term. Our senate is in a tie creating Senate co-chairs plus a Senate vice-chair in all of the 25 legislative committees. The House has a new Speaker and majority leader with the potential at any time for four democrats to flip their votes to join republicans on issues.

Some primary issues hoping to be resolved in this session are pensions and union givebacks, school funding related to a lawsuit, forecasting the transportation crisis from bridges to FastTrack to UBER to railcars, and municipal aid to cities and towns.

CBA This Session

There are a number of issues the CBA is proposing or keeping its eyes on, including the Right to Civil Counsel, Increased penalties for the threatening of judges, right to carry, attorneys who are prohibited from practicing law. There are also a

couple of issues that have arisen such as assisted suicide and restoring the death penalty. There are a few bills proposing the legalization of marijuana and a host of bills regarding opioids, neither which would have been on the table five years ago.

The CBA still has numerous issues for which sections have positions to oppose or support. We will continue to monitor the judicial branch budget. This session we also plan to make technical corrections to bills that have already passed, such as the recent LLC Act, the CT Business Corporations Act, and the Power of Attorney. Sometimes you either have to update the acts or clean them up. We are also proposing a Benefits LLC bill and the revised uniform arbitration act, along with a couple of other bills that didn't make it in past years.

Since there will be so much focus on the budget, unions, health care, municipal, and education aid, there may be little time for any other issues. So we will continue to work to get support for our issues and protect ourselves from other issues that may affect the practice of law and the legal community. **CL**

CAPITOL UPDATE NEWSLETTER

Check your inbox every Monday for your Capitol Update in the CBA's Weekly Docket newsletter during this year's legislative session for a recap of the past week at the Capitol and the Legislative Office Building as well as what to expect during the coming week.

CAPITOL UPDATE VIDEO SERIES—NEW

Stay current as the CBA's legislative lobbyist, Bill Chapman, guides you through the 2017 legislative session with latest news, interviews, CBA position updates, and more in a brief video each week. Interviews include:

CBA President-elect Karen DeMeola

State Comptroller Kevin Lembo

Elder Law Section Lobbyist Melissa Biggs

State Representative Stephanie Cummings

Louise DiCocco, CBIA

State Representative Steven Stafstrom

State Senator John Kissel

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