

## **LEG REG REVIEW**

### **2023, 19<sup>th</sup> Issue September 13, 2023**

*LEG REG REVIEW is a periodic newsletter produced by Vince Phillips who retired from active lobbying after 31 years of advocacy in Harrisburg. It contains news on the legislative and regulatory scene in Pennsylvania that may be of interest to the Insurance and Business Communities. Annual subscriptions are \$100 and information may be obtained by contacting PHILLIPS ASSOCIATES at 717/728-1217 or e-mail to [xenobun@aol.com](mailto:xenobun@aol.com).*

#### **SPECIAL ELECTION TO ESTABLISH (AGAIN) DEMOCRATIC CONTROL**

On September 19, Allegheny County voters will vote in a special election to see who succeeds former Rep. Sara Innamorato who resigned from the House June 19 to focus on her candidacy for County Executive. Since the district is heavily Democratic the winner is expected to return Democrats to a one-seat majority. The House has not been in session since before the Senate's vote for two Fiscal Code bills on August 30. These bills will enable parts of the unfinished State Budget to take effect. House leadership would have had to contend with tie votes since both parties have been at even strength since former Rep. Innamorato's resignation.

The House resumes its work in Harrisburg on September 26 following the Senate's return September 18.

#### **WHAT IS IN THOSE FISCAL CODE BILLS?**

**Senate Bill 757** (Stefano-R-Bedford/Somerset/Fayette/Westmoreland) and **House Bill 1300** (Mehaffe-R-Dauphin), if approved by the House, would allow funding to flow from several programs such as the recently enacted Home Repair subsidy program and allow new programs to begin...UNLESS the school voucher issue again deadlocks the two chambers. Recall that Governor Josh Shapiro used a line-item veto to take out a State Budget \$103.7 million program establishing a scholarship program for households under 250% of Federal poverty guideline students in low-performing school districts after Senate Republicans believed that he would follow through with what they thought was a commitment to support. The Governor reversed course thanks to strong opposition by House Democrats and unions such as the PA School Education Association (PSEA). The Republican scholarship program was inserted into SB 757 that went to the House for concurrence.

Also, in SB 757 was \$1,000,000 for capital-related and deferred maintenance for PA's four Chartered Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, transparency rules for the Neighborhood Improvement Zone program and increases the total amount of tax credits for the Education Improvement Tax Credit program by \$150 million.

The vote for **Senate Bill 757** was 28-19 for with Democrats voting no except for Senator Anthony Williams (D-Delaware/Phila.) who crossed over to vote with the majority Republicans for the bill. This bill contained language for the PA Award for Student Success Scholarship (school voucher).

**House Bill 1300** passed 29-18 with Senator Williams voting yes. He was joined by fellow Democrat Lisa Boscola (D-Lehigh/Northampton). Two Democrats and one GOP Senator did not vote for either bill.

**House Bill 1300** contains provisions involving 45 separate programs, none of which directly affect Insurance.

#### **HOUSE AND SENATE CALENDARS**

The Senate has two bills on its calendar for third consideration. (This term means that both could be voted on now if Senate leadership chooses to do so). They are:

- **Senate Bill 365** (Bartolotta-R-Beaver/Greene/Washington) provides for Workers Compensation coverage for post-traumatic stress injury.
- **Senate Bill** (Vogel-R-Beaver) regulates Telemedicine and requires health insurance coverage for those claims.

## **INSURANCE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES INSURANCE BENEFITS RECOVERY**

On September 12, the PA Insurance Department claimed success in finding orphan policies. PID reported that more than \$62 million life insurance and annuity death benefits had been recovered from 4,000 policies since January 2023. The Department is utilizing a tool developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) called the NAIC Locator which researches the so-called Death List maintained by the Federal Government and links those names to past and present carriers.

PA Insurance Commissioner Michael Humphries emphasized the importance of life insurance and the critical help beneficiaries receive when an orphan policy is found. September is Life Insurance Awareness Month. He said that according to the American Council of Life Insurers, 6.1 million individual life policies were in force in Pennsylvania in 2021, averaging \$143,000 in death benefit protection. That year, \$11.8 billion in life insurance and annuity benefits were paid to PA families.

## **REGULATORY UPDATES**

- These companies have filed applications for designation as Reciprocal Reinsurers: Hannover Life Reinsurance Company of America (Bermuda); Conduit Reinsurance Ltd.; Fedelis Insurance Bermuda Ltd.; Liberty Special Markets Bermuda Ltd. and Fidelis Underwriting Ltd.
- The Patient Safety Authority is planning a Zoom meeting for September 21 at 1:00 p.m. Questions: 717-346-0469.

## **NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH**

The Federal Government is again taking the lead in National Preparedness Month. This year's theme is Prepare To Protect. It highlights how preparing for disasters is important to families, businesses, and communities. This year, however, there is a shift in messaging towards racial equity and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a new strategy "*for cultural competence that includes empowering historically underserved communities to prepare for a disaster.*" In addition, there is a priority in helping seniors. Following is a link to ways to help seniors and several post links: [https://www.ready.gov/older-adults?utm\\_source=Listrak&utm\\_medium=Email&utm\\_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.ready.gov%2folder-adults&utm\\_campaign](https://www.ready.gov/older-adults?utm_source=Listrak&utm_medium=Email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.ready.gov%2folder-adults&utm_campaign).

### [National Preparedness Month Social Media Toolkit](#)

- [2023 National Preparedness Month Social Media Graphics](#)
- [National Preparedness Month Social Media Graphics](#) (Past years)
- [National Preparedness Month Animated Graphics](#)
- [President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. Signs Proclamation for National Preparedness Month 2023](#)
- [Preparedness for Older Adults](#)
- [Personal Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities Social Media Toolkit](#)

PA's preparedness theme is 'Are You Ready Pennsylvania'? Some recent posts include: [Ask A State Trooper: Back to School Safety](#); [Ask a Veterinarian: Pets & Heat Safety](#); [When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors](#); and [Get Ready for Hurricane Season](#)

Its website is <https://www.ready.pa.gov/Are-You-Ready-PA/Pages/Article.aspx?post=56>.

## **NABIP (NAHU) HAS NEW CEO**

On September 1, Jessica Brooks-Woods became CEO of the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals (NABIP, formerly known as NAHU). She founded the Executive Action and Response Network (EARN) and EARN Staffing Solutions. These firms fostered diversity, equity, and inclusion within the business community. No stranger to Pennsylvania, Jessica Brooks-Wood was also the President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Business Group from 2013 to 2022 and earned a Master's in Public Management from Carnegie Mellon University. She serves on several boards including the Board of Governors for Pitt's Institute of Entrepreneurial Excellence and the PA Health Insurance Exchange (Pennie). Brooks-Woods succeeds Janet Trautwine who served NAHU for 26 years.