



May 9 & May 23

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE-2017 TRACKER REPORT #6

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

This is that time of the Session when nobody seems to have an answers to the questions of the day as things happen as they happen. In my last report to you, I outlined SF 803, the Public Safety Omnibus bill as it was when referred to the Conference Committee. Things have changed drastically and as the result of many unique situations. Usually we expect contention between the two major parties, the Majority and the Minority. This year there is significant differences of opinion between several members of the Majority party. First, we observed contention between Senator Limmer in the Senate and Rep. Cornish in the House, when Cornish included a large number of policy provisions in the Appropriations bill and questions arose whether this was constitutional. Technically, there is language in the law that is specific to this issue that states this should not be done. On the other hand, as Cornish pointed out, it has been being done by the Legislature for the past several years. Complicating the debate is the fact that Governor Dayton has publically stated that he opposes any policy items in the Appropriations bills and stated this makes them potential candidates for a veto.

Secondly, neither Limmer or Cornish are satisfied with the spending limits imposed by the Republican leadership and both have argued that the Public Safety bill has serious shortages in funding to even maintain current programming. This continues to be an issue in the Conference Committee as discussions continue. **SF 803 Conference Committee is scheduled to meet again this morning (Tuesday, May 9th)** in another effort to approve the final language for the leadership to negotiate with the Governor and his staff. Those meetings with the Governor are expected to start on Thursday this week.

The current language of the Conference Committee bill has removed a number of the policy provisions from the original seventeen which were written into the original bill, but all of the remaining provisions are still being negotiated and nothing can be considered "safe" at this point. It really doesn't make sense to expand upon the specifics in the current bill until we see what the Conference Committee passes at it's conclusion. Then we'll probably see more changes in the negotiations with the Governor. You can see why this is a moving target.

The 71 page Conference Committee appropriation bill currently falls \$88 short of the Governor's biennial corrections request and would have significant adverse effect on state operations. It is reported that a budget reduction of that amount would result in a possible loss of up to 250 staff positions in Corrections, and perhaps even have to shutter one current institution.

Yet, the sky is not falling at this point, and we haven't been hearing voices talking about another government shutdown. Negotiations are continuing, and I expect this will continue right up to the final days of the Session, which must adjourn on May 22nd. We'll continue to monitor changes and report back to you as we obtain accurate information. As we've said in the past, "it's going to be an interesting final 13 days!

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Well here we are members - current session of the legislature adjourned at midnight last evening, work undone, and immediately entered into a Special Session as agreed upon by the Legislative leaders and the Governor. Adjournment came without approval of most of the major Omnibus bills, no Tax bill, no budget and

no Bonding bill. The Special Session was called however, with the understanding that there was general agreement on language to pass all the previously mentioned bills today and tomorrow, with the Legislature expected to adjourn sine die, by midnight Wednesday. Nothing further we can report on at this point, so more information will be forthcoming. Interestingly, very few Legislators are even aware of what the agreements have been, and that information is being held tight-lipped by the Governor and Speaker Doudt and Senate President Galzelka. More to you later this week!

Thanks for your support!

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