West Virginia Chamber Addresses House Small Business Committee

On Thursday, February 16, West Virginia Chamber President Steve Roberts spoke to the members of the West Virginia House Small Business, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Committee. Roberts discussed the challenges faced by small businesses operating in West Virginia and what is needed to help them succeed. Roberts also highlighted recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics that shows West Virginia has begun an economic recovery and added 7,000 new jobs to its overall economy in the second half of 2016.

Bill to Eliminate Unemployment Compensation Benefits for Strikers Moves Forward in Senate

The Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday approved Committee Substitute for SB 222, which would eliminate unemployment compensation benefits for strikers unless they are locked-out or permanently replaced by an employer. The bill contains specific definitions of what constitutes “permanent replacement workers” and a “lock-out.” Unemployment benefits would not be available to striking workers who are temporarily replaced during a strike while the business continues to operate with non-striking employees and temporary replacements. Officials
from the AFL-CIO spoke against the bill, while the employer community supported the legislation. The bill was previously approved by the Senate Workforce Committee and will be considered by the full Senate next week.

**Technical Corrections to Workplace Freedom Act Approved by Senate Judiciary Committee**

Yesterday the Senate Judiciary Committee approved SB 330. The bill makes technical changes to last year's Workplace Freedom Act (Right-to-Work). SB 330 deletes a definition of the word "state" from the Act, and also eliminates language from a portion of the Act which referred to collective bargaining agreements in the building and construction industry. The bill further clarifies that these changes are retroactive in nature, relating back to the original effective date of the Act (July 1, 2016). SB 330 was approved in the committee on a 10-6 vote and will be before the full Senate next week.

**BILLS TO WATCH**

**TO REVIEW THE TEXT OF ANY BILL CLICK THE BILL NUMBER**

**STATE SENATE**

**SB 7 ---** Requiring election by division in the House of Delegates' districts with two or more delegates

**SB 18 ---** Requiring ACT and ACT Aspire to be used as comprehensive statewide student assessment.

**SB 54 ---** Relating to rate of interest allowed for prejudgment and post-judgment interest.

**SB 55 ---** Allowing admission of use or nonuse of safety belt in civil actions for damages

**SB 58 ---** Relating to product liability actions

**SB 67 ---** Establishing Supreme Court online case management system

**SB 75 ---** Creating Small Business Regulatory Review Board

**SB 181 ---** Abolishing regional education service agencies

Sunday, March 26

Last day to consider bills on 3rd Reading (passage stage)

Wednesday, March 29

Session Adjourns
Midnight Saturday, April 8
**SB 197** --- Excluding certain medical care amounts from compensatory damage awards (phantom damages)

**SB 222 / HB 2435** --- Providing disqualification for unemployment benefits for individual who left or lost job as a result of strike

**SB 236 / SB 287** --- Relating to damages for medical monitoring

**SB 239** --- Limiting use of wages by employers and labor organizations for political activities

**SB 244** --- Gas Co-Tenancy & Lease Integration

**SB 245** --- Gas Company Surveying

**SB 246** --- Water Quality Standards / Harmonic Mean Flow / Mixing Zones

**SB 272** --- Drug-Free Workplace Act

**SB 277** --- Creation of an Intermediate Appellate Court

**SB 330** --- Technical Corrections to Workplace Freedom Act

**SB 335** --- Tax Reform

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

**HB 2124** --- Providing that members of the House of Delegates in districts having more than one delegate be elected from numbered divisions

**HB 2151** --- Prohibiting the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment

**HB 2439** --- Relating to Insurance and Unfair Claim Settlement Practices
Register TODAY!

2017 LEGISLATIVE Briefings

Charleston Town Center Marriott
7:30 am – 8:30 am

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 –
“Legislative Leadership Overview”
Tuesday, February 28, 2017 –
“Oil & Gas Development in West Virginia”
Tuesday, March 7, 2017 –
“Tax Reform & State Budget”

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