



# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

State Employees Association of North Carolina • www.seanc.org

P.O. Drawer 27727 • Raleigh, NC 27611 • 888-732-6242/919-833-1616 (Press 1)

June 10, 2011

## Race to the Finish Line

This past week at the legislature was "crossover week." Thursday was the crossover deadline, which meant that any bill that does not result in a cost to the state must "crossover" successfully from one chamber to the other in order to stay alive for the remainder of the legislative session.

Crossover week had SEANC lobbyists especially busy protecting state employee personnel records and State Personnel Act rights, but there were other issues pertaining to state employees that the lobbyists concentrated on as well.

Chief among SEANC concerns was HB 927, which dealt with changes to the Teachers and State Employees' Retirement System. At one time this bill included a minimum retirement age, a change in maximum sick leave accrual and other items SEANC opposed. SEANC Executive Director Dana Cope and Speaker Pro Tem Dale Folwell, who sponsored the bill, met about SEANC's opposition to those provisions, and in the final version of HB 927, those sections were taken out entirely.

SEANC appreciates Rep. Folwell's willingness to work with us on this issue and to protect employees, retirees and future retirees. HB 927 passed the House this week and is headed to the Senate.

SEANC also appreciates Rep. Folwell's work on HB 928. This bill makes changes to the State Health Plan that would allow for conversion of the plan to a calendar year, which SEANC has supported for years. It will be particularly helpful to Medicare eligible retirees who currently deal with two different years for their health care plans.

HB 928 also provides an incentive for those who find health care billing mistakes. Rep. Folwell took a SEANC suggestion to reward plan members who find errors that cost the health plan unnecessary money. Employees and retirees who find these errors will now receive 10 percent of any money the SHP recovers as a result of their efforts. Thanks again to Rep. Folwell who told SEANC lobbyists in meetings that he not only read SEANC's Save Our State report, but has tried to use the suggestions the report contained.

HB 928 passed the House and is being sent to the Senate for consideration.

HB 335, which was originally a bill to allow for more privatization of prison maintenance, was fought by SEANC in the House earlier this session. The result of that effort on behalf of SEANC staff, SEANC President Charles Johnson, Past President Tony Smith and more than 50 SEANC members who came to lobby the issue was an amendment on the House floor that does not allow for expansion on privatization in that area.

HB 335 was presented in the Senate Finance Committee this week by bill sponsor Rep. David Guice. The bill came out of committee unchanged and is now being sent to the Senate floor. This is one step closer to a good outcome for taxpayers and the hardworking prison maintenance workers who do a quality job for less money than their private counterparts.

According to House Speaker Thom Tillis, next week will be the final week of session. The main issue before the General Assembly will be the budget. The governor has until Tuesday to veto the budget if that is what she decides to do. It appears, however, that the five Democrats who voted for the budget are intending to stick with their original votes. This would provide enough votes to override a veto.

The budget passed by the General Assembly included less cuts to SEANC member jobs than the governor's budget and fully funded the retirement system, which the governor's budget failed to do.

As we go into this final stretch, SEANC lobbyists will continue to work for our members in the General Assembly to achieve as many of the SEANC legislative objectives voted on by our delegates at convention.