



State Employees Association of North Carolina • [www.seanc.org](http://www.seanc.org)

# LEGISLATIVE *Update*

*June 5, 2015*

## **Debate over state employee rights pushed aside**

The House and Senate spent most of their time and attention this week attempting to override Gov. Pat McCrory's vetoes on legislation regarding magistrates and workplace regulation, and had no time to debate a bill SEANC strongly opposes that would change several state personnel statutes.

The bill, HB 495, is a pet project of Gov. McCrory and his State Human Resources Director Neil Alexander. SEANC has had serious problems with the bill since it was changed in a House committee in May from a simple technical corrections bill to include changes to due process, hiring and RIF rights procedures and political hirings provisions.

SEANC lobbyists were able to work with House members to remove several parts of the bill to which we objected, but serious problems remain. It still leaves the door wide open to political hirings and opened parts of performance management documents to public scrutiny that should remain closed. The bad parts of this bill create bigger government power at the expense of the Constitutional rights of employees.

Currently, SEANC is working with senators on offering amendments that would change three parts to which we still object. One part of the bill essentially gives the State Human Resources Commission the ability to set policies governing state employment. This constitutes "lawmaking" and circumvents the normal legislative process. It also violates the state constitution, which states that only legislators have the authority to create laws.

Another amendment would change a portion of the bill that would open performance records up to hiring managers when a state employee applies for a different position in state government. The third proposed amendment advocates for the state to hire the "most qualified" candidate for a job, rather than just someone who is qualified, in the interest of preventing political hirings in non-exempt positions.

It's possible that the bill hasn't reached a floor vote because Senate leaders don't have the votes to pass it in its current form thanks to support SEANC has garnered for its amendments. Since the bill has passed the House, it has to pass the Senate without changes in order to be sent to the governor. Otherwise, it will have to go to conference to iron out differences.

The bill has been placed on the Senate's calendar for next Tuesday. SEANC will continue to work with senators to make sure our objections are heard.

### **Still no Senate budget proposal**

This week it seems we may be even further away from seeing a Senate budget proposal than we thought. The chatter from last week suggested that it may be public as soon as Monday, but now conventional thinking is that it is still a few weeks away.

The governor's budget, if you'll recall, did not include across-the-board raises for state employees or a cost-of-living adjustment for retirees. The House version did include a 2-percent pay increase and 2-percent cost-of-living adjustment.

The House budget passed with overwhelming support, thanks in part to SEANC's efforts to convince Democrats and some on-the-fence Republicans to vote for it.

SEANC continues to remind senators that [state employees have fallen behind the price of goods and services over the last five years](#) to the point that salaries aren't worth nearly as much as they were. This has resulted in a net salary decrease for state employees in that time of almost 7 percent. Retiree cost-of-living adjustments have been even worse, resulting in a net decrease in buying power of more than 8 percent for our state's retirees over the last five years.

### **Contact your legislators**

Now is the time for you to [contact your lawmakers](#). Make your voice heard on the need for all state employees to receive a pay raise and all retirees to receive a cost-of-living increase. We need all hands on deck. Help your legislators put a face to state employees, SEANC and their constituents. Not sure who your legislators are? [Click here](#). Curious whether they were endorsed by EMPAC? [Click here](#). Want to make note of all of SEANC's legislative priorities before talking to them? [Click here](#).

SEANC staff can also help you schedule meetings with your lawmakers and make sure you have the most up-to-date information possible about SEANC's legislative priorities, so you can have a good and productive conversation. All you have to do is let us know you're coming. Just email [tbooe@seanc.org](mailto:tbooe@seanc.org) or call 800-222-2758.

Can't make it to Raleigh? No problem. You can call, write or email your legislators – or even schedule your own time to meet with them in your hometown. Again, you can find your lawmakers and their contact information [here](#).