



Memorandum

TO: Randi DiAntonio, Vice President
FROM: Patrick Lyons, Legislative Director
DATE: June 11, 2021
RE: Legislative Session Wrap-Up

The 2021 Legislative session ended only a few hours ago (around 4 AM on Friday, June 11) and it was another productive year for PEF and its membership.

Below is a list of some of the bills important to PEF and our brothers and sisters in organized labor that passed both houses. With a few noted exceptions, all of the following bills still need to be sent to the Governor for signature before the end of the year.

PEF Pay Bill

A.8036 (Abbate)/S.7232 (Jackson)

This bill provides the funding for salary increases and other benefits as bargained for in the tentative 2019-2023 contract. It is contingent upon ratification of the proposed contract by the PEF membership.

Clinical Staffing Committees

A.108-B (Gunther)/S.1168-A (Rivera)

This bill would establish a clinical staffing committee at each general hospital in the state. Each committee would be responsible for the production and implementation of an annual clinical staffing plan developed jointly by the management and staff comprising the committee.

Governor's action due by 6/18

“O” Closure Reporting

A.117-C (Gunther)/S.1765-A (Mannion)

This bill would require reporting on proposed closures, staffing levels and recruitment efforts at OMH, OCFS and OPWDD facilities on a quarterly basis.

OPWDD Detailed Budget Savings Report A.7352 (Abinanti)/S.6292 (Mannion)
This bill would require a “scorecard” as part of the state budget to specifically show changes to OPWDD’s budget and how any savings would be reinvested to help people with developmental disabilities.

COVID-19 Death Benefit A.3988 (Abbate)/S.4681 (Gounardes)
This bill extends the COVID-19 death benefit for public employees. This benefit was created last year. It now covers workers who die on or before December 31, 2022.

Time Off for COVID-19 Vaccinations A.3354-B (Fall)/S.2588-A (Gounardes)
This bill provides public employees with four hours of uncharged leave for COVID-19 vaccinations.
Signed into law, 3/12/21

Prohibits Retaliation for COVID-19 Absences A.4063-A (Abbate)/S.4201-A (Savino)
This bill would prohibit public employers from disciplining or taking other adverse personnel actions against an employee for absences related to COVID-19.

Agency Planning for Declared Emergency A.980 (Abbate)/S.1295 (Gounardes)
This bill is a chapter amendment for the main legislation passed in 2020. These changes include removing contractors from the legislation and clarifying the statutory deadlines for public employers to publish and finalize their plans.

Extension of Injunctive Relief A.6096 (Abbate)/S.6065 (Gounardes)
This bill extends the expiration of injunctive relief for improper practice cases for two additional years, through June 2023.

Prohibition on Double Bunking A.702 (Jones)/S.2211 (Sepulveda)
This bill would prohibit the dangerous practice of double bunking inmates at the state’s correctional facilities.

World Trade Center Recovery Benefit A.6384-A (Abbate)/S.4961-B (Gounardes)
This bill would extend the benefits of public employees who assisted with the WTC recovery efforts to citizens who subsequently became public employees after Sept. 11, 2001.

State Veterans’ Cemeteries A.1920 (Barrett)/S.866 (Brooks)
This bill is a chapter amendment to a 2020 law. It provides clarity for the siting of state veterans’ cemeteries by certifying funds, creating selection committees and criteria for the selection committees.
Signed into law, 2/16/21

State Government Diversity Report

A.2439 Aubry)/S.4746 (Parker)

This bill would require an annual report from the Civil Service Commission about diversity within state government.

Civil Service Examination Report

A.2004 (Reyes)/S.3070 (Sepulveda)

This bill would require a study on the current civil service examination process and provide recommendations for increasing diversity in recruiting and hiring.

BUDGET SUCCESSES:

In addition to the legislative successes noted above, there were numerous victories during the budget process. They include: Saving the Goshen and Brentwood OCFS facilities from expedited closure; saving Rockland Children's Psychiatric Center from closure; defeating several retiree health care cost increases proposals; increasing the subsidy for Roswell Park Cancer Institute by \$13 million; and defeating the problematic mergers between OMH and OASAS and IBR and the NY Psychiatric Institute.