

It Ain't All Gumdrops & Rainbows

By Bill Cross & Niki Terzieff, OSPA's Government Affairs Advocates

The State Legislature mercifully adjourned this past July, giving way to a short reprieve before the Interim Legislative Days just in mid-September. Gone are the days when policy making - and the ensuing politics - take the holidays off. Any more, the interim is hardly a time of peace and quiet, mirroring more and more the on-going saga of national politics. Within the next six months, OSPA and your Advocacy Team will have already gone through 2 months with legislative days, a 35-day legislative session and even one special election. It is a far cry from the schedule kept by this citizen legislature prior to 2007, which was specifically an every-other-year affair.

While the design for the "Short Session" was to balance the budget and improve implementation of previously passed legislation, the intent has not always matched the impact. It is expected, instead, that the 35-day run will be packed with large issues, looming and controversial. With one deadline every 7-10 to days, crafting and ushering a bill through the legislative process and to the Governor's desk requires foundational work; and, a lot of it. Remember, the politics is more than democrats and republicans. If a bill can make it out of the House, for example, it does not mean it has a path through the Senate. Chamber dynamics have driven many bills to their graves, both despite and in-spite of efforts by leadership.

The election that appears quickly on the heels of the February Session also results in positioning during the interim. Time spent back at home is still filled with office-hours, town halls and community coffees, but added to the calendar are campaign events, fundraisers and media opportunities. Each of these activities are key constituent services and fall on top of any other personal and professional responsibility a legislator has. Salem is *supposed* to be part-time.

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2017-18 Legislative Deadlines:

- November 13, 14, 15: Legislative Days
- November 21: Legislators Deadline for Bill Request
- November 29: Quarterly Revenue Forecast
- January 8: Proposed Bills are Returned to Legislators
- January 10, 11, 12: Legislative Days
- January 16: Bill Introduction Deadline (not all ideas are pursued)
- January 23: Special Election possible on [Health Care Tax Repeal](#)
- February 5 to March 11: 2018 Legislative Session

Please feel free to contact us at any time if you have any questions by emailing Bill Cross at bill@wvcross.com or Niki Terzieff at niki@leadingedgepublicaffairs.com.