**At the State House**

At the time of writing Under the Dome, only one hearing has been posted for this week. Congress continues to discuss and debate various aid packages; and until that process is complete, it will be difficult for the State to move forward on a budget. Please continue to watch your email. We will notify you if something new comes to light.

**Tuesday, July 28th**

The **Senate Finance Committee will take testimony at 4:00 p.m. on the Governor’s Budget Article 20, Section 13 (RIte Share).**

The proposal requires businesses with 50+ employees to:

(1) Submit an annual report to the Executive Office and Health and Human Services and the Division of Taxation providing “sufficient and necessary information for the Medicaid agency to determine employee eligibility for RIte Share. This language is concerning because no one knows for sure what it means. Is it simply a list of employees who are covered by insurance and the health insurance plan offered by business? Is it a more comprehensive report providing personal information about each employee that does not have coverage including family income, size or alternate health care information? Failure to submit the information requested results in a $5000 fine which is too high.

(2)Submit quarterly reports outlining which employees are enrolled in the employer’s health care plan and which employees are not covered. The quarterly report must also include the names of individuals no longer employed by the business. Failure to file this report brings a fine of $2500 – again, too high.

(3) Refrain from offering employees a financial incentive to turn down the employer’s health insurance and remain on Medicaid. This language could be interpreted to ban giving employees a bump in pay if they do not take the employer’s health insurance. Some employees choose to take a spouse’s or a parent’s health coverage. We want to be sure employees are not penalized for making good family choices, nor are employers penalized by requiring double health coverage on employees which would be a waste of economic resources.

It unclear whether these provisions would apply to businesses with 50 or more individuals working; or if, like the Affordable Care Act, it would apply to businesses with 50 or more FTEs (employees working 30 or more hours a week).  The ACA also excludes seasonal businesses where employees work less than 120 days a year or less than 4 calendar months.

Members of the public may submit written testimony to: SLegislation@rilegislature.gov Testimony submitted prior to 3:00 PM on the date of the hearing will be provided to the members of the committee at the hearing and will be included in the meeting records. Testimony submitted after that time will be placed on file.