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May 6, 2016

In the two weeks since the 109th General Assembly adjourned, we've been busy fielding phone calls inviting us to campaign events, putting fundraisers on our calendars, and attending a veritable cornucopia of licensure board meetings. And they say the life of a lobbyist isn't fun! Now that we're back in our office across the street, we've included for our photo of the week, an ode to the building we love most in Nashville, one we've spent a lot of time in over the past four months.

### **3-Star Healthy Project**

The "3-Star Healthy Project" task force, created by Speaker Beth Harwell (R-Nashville) to develop experimental pilot programs to make health care more efficient and to increase access to care for the uninsured, met for the first time last week. The leader of the task force, Rep. Cameron Sexton (R-Crossville) says that the task force will be developing its own proposal, as opposed to adopting Insure Tennessee. Task force members are looking for ways to roll out a pilot program to assist uninsured Tennesseans without going immediately to full Medicaid expansion. At its Nashville meeting, the task force discussed various provisions of expansion including charging people premiums for coverage and offering incentives to see a doctor. They also discussed the legislature's desire to suspend expansion if it costs more than expected. They have scheduled their next meeting in Memphis on Monday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. They are expected to meet in East Tennessee on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. The task force promised to deliver a report in June along with an expected meeting with federal officials. It is unlikely lawmakers would vote on any proposal until they return in January 2017.

### **Bills Becoming Law**

Governor Haslam signed into law the controversial bill giving state-licensed professional counselors and marital and family therapists the legal authority to deny service to clients on the basis of the counselor's "sincerely held principles". The legislation is opposed by the American Counseling Association (ACA), who says that it violates the group's code of ethics that mental health professionals cannot refuse treatment based on "personally held values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors." The ACA is scheduled to hold their national annual convention in Nashville, but is now reconsidering.

Governor Haslam let the "guns on campus" bill become law without his signature, stating that he disagrees with the bill but acknowledging the Legislature's efforts to tailor the bill to specific situations. The new law, which takes effect immediately, allows faculty and staff of public universities to take guns on campus, if they have a valid permit and notify the university. It will keep gun bans in place for stadiums or gymnasiums while school-sponsored events are in progress; meetings where disciplinary or tenure issues are being discussed; hospitals or offices where medical or mental health services are provided; and any location prohibited by another law, such as at day care centers or elementary

schools located on campus.

## **Fundraising Season**

The legislative session has ended, campaigns are kicking off, and fundraising season is here. The calls are starting to come in. A proliferation of fundraisers has begun, including 10-12 that are already scheduled for May.

## **Licensure Boards and Meetings of Interest**

There have been many licensure board and meetings of interest in the last week. Some include: Health Care Facilities Licensure Board, TN Emergency Communications Board, State Capitol Commission, TN Commission on Children and Youth, and more. All meetings are listed on our homepage under "Upcoming Legislative Events, available [here](#).

## **Political News**

Governor Haslam confirmed the "mystery" \$30 million included in this year's budget will go toward General Motors, who announced that it is spending \$790 million to build a new high-efficiency engine at its plant in Tennessee, creating nearly 800 jobs.

The number of registered political action committees (PACs) in Tennessee decreased in 2015. The state Registry of Election Finance reports \$3.85 million in PAC donations were made during the year, virtually the same as in 2013, the last non-election year. Top account balances include Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey at \$650,000; House Speaker Beth Harwell at \$1.6 million; and Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris at \$509,405. The full report is available [here](#).

Former state Rep. Kent Coleman died at his home last week. He was 61. Rep. Coleman served the 40th district in the General Assembly from 2002 to 2010. Rep. Mike Sparks (R-Smyrna), now holds that seat. During his eight years in the House, Kent served as a member of the Finance, Ways and Means Committee, Calendar and Rules Committee, and his largest contribution, serving as chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. He was truly one of the good ones and will be missed.

## **Photo of the Week:**

Our photo of the week is of the Capitol on the last day of Session. Sine Die!

