

Community Trends®



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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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THE POWER OF YOUR VOICES

If your cause is righteous and reasonable, and if you speak up in support of it, good things can happen...

This idea was affirmed recently when our bill to provide limited immunity to common interest communities in New Jersey from COVID-19 claims (A4979/S3584) was passed by both chambers of our legislature and sent to the Governor to be signed into law. When it was first introduced in the Assembly back in November 2020 by Atlantic County Assemblymen Vince Mazzeo and John Armato at the urging of your LAC, the conventional wisdom was that the bill stood little chance of passage. Several other competing bills seeking immunity for various segments of our society had already been introduced but had made little or no progress. We were told that while these worthy groups would benefit from such immunity, the legislature generally had “little appetite” for immunity legislation.

Undaunted, we asked our CAI members and constituents to reach out to their local legislators to explain the urgent need for this liability protection and to ask for their support of this legislation. That’s when good things started to happen...

Having heard from many of her constituents in Mercer and Middlesex Counties on this issue, Senator Linda Greenstein agreed to sponsor our bill in the New Jersey Senate and introduced it in late March. It quickly received a hearing in the Senate Community Development and Urban Affairs Committee (chaired by Senator Troy Singleton of Burlington

County) and was passed out of committee without objection in early May. We again asked our members and constituents to reach out to their local legislators to encourage passage of the bill... and you again responded! The bill was unanimously passed by the full Senate on June 3.

With summer fast approaching and the scheduled legislative recess set to begin June 28, we again reached out to you for your help... and you again responded! The Speaker of the Assembly was impressed with our grassroots

“The improbable journey of this bill would not have ended successfully without two things...”

advocacy efforts and agreed to have the bill assigned and posted in the Assembly Community Development and Affairs Committee where on June 14 it was passed out of that committee without objection. One of the members of that committee commented that she had received “so many” requests for support from her constituents that she was moved to vote in favor of it.

The bill was then posted and voted on by the full Assembly on June 24 where it was again passed *unanimously!* After concurrence with the approved Senate version of the bill, the bill was sent to Governor Murphy for his signature to make it law. As of this writing we have not yet received that

CONTINUES ON PAGE 2

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE...

from page 1.

news, but we are counting on him to sign this bill into law to provide the protection our common interest communities need to safely open their amenities this summer season and the rest of the year.

The improbable journey of this bill would not have ended successfully without two things: the frequent, respectful and impactful communications from our members and constituents to their legislators and our Governor in support of the bill,

and your contributions to our Community Associations Institute Political Action Committee (CA-PAC) which enable us to hire an effective lobbying team and gain us face-to-face meetings with the influential legislators who successfully moved this bill through the legislative process. Your voices and your dollars made the difference!

Enjoy the summer... stay safe. See you here in the next issue of *Trends*. ■