



North Carolina Spirits Association

Legislative Report
June 5, 2020

As the legislature moves toward an anticipated adjournment by the end of this month, numerous committees are meeting and bills are starting to move through the committee process. Once a bill is approved by the relevant committee, it is then moving to the full House or the full Senate for consideration.

While the legislature is attempting to keep the process as open as possible, and to comply with social distancing due to COVID-19, some members are attending meetings in person and others are attending meetings electronically.

During this past week there have been numerous protests in downtown Raleigh. Some remained peaceful and some did not and resulted in extensive property damage. The protests in the vicinity of the State Legislative Building that did not remain peaceful occurred when the legislature was not in session.

The state remains under Phase II of Governor Cooper's three-part plan to reopening. Restaurants and hair salons are open at 50% capacity and the stay at home order has been lifted as part of Phase II, spelled out in Executive Order 141. Phase II also limits mass gatherings to no more than 25 people. Several groups, including gyms, have filed lawsuits hoping the courts will allow them to open. On Thursday, Governor Cooper announced he was considering moving the state into a "Phase 2.5" which would ease some restrictions, but not fully move the state into Phase III. The state is expected to move into Phase III at the end of the month or early July. However, late Friday afternoon, Governor Cooper vetoed the bill passed by the legislature last week that would allow restaurants, breweries, wineries, distilleries, bars, and clubs to increase their capacity beyond the terms of the Phase II Executive Order since the bill would remove his executive authority to respond to potential spikes in COVID-19 cases.

The Senate rolled out legislation to allow gyms to reopen under Governor Coopers COVID-19 restrictions. The bills specifies that gyms and personal fitness centers can reopen at 50% capacity, but facilities must follow guidelines to reduce virus spread, and frequently sanitize equipment. Gyms are also allowed to open childcare services at 50% capacity. Committee members heard from various gym owners who explained the economic hardship they are experiencing as a result of being forced to close, spoke to the physical and mental well-being that gyms bring to their customers. The bill has passed the Senate Commerce Committee this week, and is expected to be heard in the Senate Rules Committee and on the Senate floor next week.

The House and Senate adjourned Thursday and will reconvene Monday.

For more information about legislation described in the legislative reports, feel free to contact me at dferrell@nexsenpruet.com or (919) 573-7421. Information is also available on the General Assembly's website: www.ncleg.gov.

Prepared By: David P. Ferrell, Esq. - NCSA Lobbyist

***NEXSEN PRUET PLLC
150 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1140
Raleigh, North Carolina 27601
Telephone: (919) 573-7421
dferrell@nexsenpruet.com
www.nexsenpruet.com***