

Professional Certification Coalition Member Strategy Call
Wednesday, September 25, 2019
11:00 a.m. EST

I. Introduction

- a. Thank you to PCC members for your membership, and for fulfilling your dues obligations during the first fiscal year.
- b. All members should have received invoices for the new fiscal year. Members may pay either in one lump sum payment or fulfill their dues obligations in two payments throughout the year.
- c. A password change will occur on October 1st and those who have made full or partial payment will receive the new password.

II. Strategic Discussions – State Legislation

- a. The PCC is monitoring fewer bills as many state legislative sessions have ended, but the PCC is still actively monitoring bills in Pennsylvania and Michigan.
- b. Please feel free to refer to the PCC Watchlist for information about the bills the PCC is monitoring.
- c. Pennsylvania Legislation
 - i. Thank you to all members who mobilized and communicated with lawmakers in Harrisburg to amplify the PCC's concerns about PA H.B. 811. We do not expect action on H.B. 811 as a stand-alone bill, but we are somewhat concerned that some of the bill's provisions may find their way into H.B. 1477 before the end of the year. The PCC continues to retain Judy Eschberger, a former legislative official, to lobby on behalf of the PCC in Pennsylvania.
 - ii. Comments by Judy Eschberger on H.B. 1477: This bill, introduced by the Criminal Justice Coalition, looks to allow those convicted for "smaller" offenses (e.g. marijuana charges) to pursue professional licensing. Currently, those with misdemeanor records can spend time and money applying for licensure and ultimately be denied a license based on that misdemeanor. The PCC has no objections to H.B. 1477 and, indeed, believes it is a good model for legislation aiming to promote the reentry of ex-offenders into the workforce without undermining professional certification.
- d. Michigan Legislation
 - i. Michigan H.B. 4488 deals with eligibility requirements for certain licenses and regulations under the Skilled Trades Regulation. The bill prohibits

licensure boards from considering any misdemeanor conviction or any conviction that does not present a risk to public “safety.”

- ii. There has been no movement since this bill was first referred to committee back in April. The PCC is working with allies in Michigan to monitor this bill and we will continue to keep an eye on it moving forward.

III. Strategic Discussion – Federal Legislation

a. S. 379 – Use of 529 plan funds for expenses associated with obtaining certifications

- i. This bill is sponsored by Senator (and presidential candidate) Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and would allow funds in 529 college savings plans to be used for expenses associated with postsecondary credentials. The PCC strongly supports this bill.
- ii. The PCC has been working with Senator Klobuchar’s staff and they have agreed to amend the bill to broaden it to include occupational licensure and professional certification.
- iii. We would like to build support for S. 379:
 - 1. We are looking for Republicans to co-sponsor this bill.
 - 2. We recommend that PCC members reach out to Finance Committee members in the Senate to attempt to build more support for the bill.
- iv. The PCC is also working with others to get a companion bill to S. 379 introduced on the House side. Freshman Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) has committed to do so and to ensure bipartisan support for the bill upon its introduction. We think Rep. Spanberger is a great person to introduce the bill because she works well Republican members and is someone that House Democrat leaders want to help, given that she represents a “swing” district. Her district is home to Virginia529, the largest 529 plan in the country. We expect that Rep. Spanberger’s bill will be introduced soon.
- v. The PCC would appreciate feedback regarding the advocacy efforts of individual members and member organizations, including information on any outreach to federal representatives, related to S. 379. We will also inform PCC members about outreach to build support for Rep. Spanberger’s bill when the time is right.

b. Fair Chance Licensing Act

- i. Introduced by Senator Booker and Rep. Bonnie Watson-Coleman of New Jersey. The Act would place limitations on licensing or “occupational certification” authorities with respect to restricting individuals’ ability to obtain a license/certification if they have a criminal conviction history.

- ii. At the end of July, the PCC met with staff from Senator Booker and Rep. Watson-Coleman's offices about our concerns regarding the Act. The PCC proposed changes to make clear that the Act would not permit private causes of action against professional certification organizations. We pointed out to them that many organizations are small non-profits and the resources available to the state regarding background checks are not necessarily available to private organizations. The staff seemed receptive to the information.
- iii. We are in communication with the National Employment Law Project, the organization that inspired the bill and has been advising Senator Booker on this legislation. The goal is to commence a dialogue and hopefully reach a mutual understanding regarding the proper scope of this bill.
- iv. No action needed from members at this stage.

IV. Stakeholder Outreach

- a. ALEC/IJ -
 - i. As you may recall, ALEC/IJ amended their 2019 model legislation after our conversation last year. We recently received IJ's draft model legislation for the 2020 legislative session and made redline suggestions we have presented to them. This redline has been emailed to members for review and comment.
- b. State-based advocacy groups – We have identified these groups through our extensive media alerts. We intend to reach out to these groups regarding our positions on state level legislation. If any members have relationships with state-based advocacy groups, please let us know.
- c. Women in Government – This group of female legislators meets several times a year to develop networking and legislative alliances. They are holding a summit on November 13-14. We are sponsoring the summit and holding a session there to present our positions on current legislation and the PCC's overall mission.
- d. National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) – Many members attended their meeting in August or participated in sponsoring the conference. We thank our members who carried the PCC's message at the NCSL conference.
- e. The Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing (ARPL) – We do not consider ARPL to be at all adversarial to the PCC and, indeed, have been in frequent communication with its organizers. ARPL is largely public relations-focused, while the PCC is more government relations-focused.

V. Membership

- a. The PCC is always looking to build membership. Please feel free to share our Summary of First Year Accomplishments and Prospectus document.

VI. Thank you for your continued membership with the PCC.