



Take Action

Hello, and welcome back to the PAC Take Action newsletter! NCRA's Government Relations team takes pride in continuing to serve you and to help you stay informed about legislative developments in the court reporting profession.

NCRA's Government Relations team works around the clock to monitor potential legislation that affects court reporting and captioning, and to educate lawmakers about the profession and why they should protect it. Grassroots advocacy is the most important tool to accomplish this. Legislators must respond to the will of the people; the more people tell their legislators what that will is, the more likely lawmakers will act on that will. For more information about how your Government Relations team can help you advocate for the court reporting and captioning professions in your state, contact Matthew Barusch, State Government Relations Manager, at mbarusch@ncra.org.

State of the Nation



Congress recently passed a short-term, \$1 trillion spending bill that will fund the government through the end of the fiscal year in September. Following tense negotiations between the Trump administration and both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, this bill averts a government shutdown.

Congress has also taken the first step toward repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act, which has been a major goal of the Republican Party. The American Health Care Act passed the House by a 217-213 vote, crossing the 216-vote threshold necessary for passage. In its current form, the bill rolls back state expansion of the Medicaid program, eliminates tax penalties for individuals without health insurance coverage, and replaces subsidized insurance policies with age-varying tax credits. In order to bring more conservative legislators on board to vote for passage of the bill, provisions were included that allow states to roll back required coverage for essential services and allow state governments to seek waivers to let insurers charge higher premiums for people with pre-existing conditions.

This legislation now awaits consideration in the Senate, where it faces an uncertain future. Both chambers have to agree on the language of this legislation, and the absence of a Congressional Budget Office score for the current version of the bill coupled with pressure to ensure constituents don't lose coverage is raising concerns in the Senate. The law will likely be amended in the Senate, and consequently a final version could look very different from the version passed by the House.

How debate unfolds on this legislation in the Senate could also affect the momentum of the Small Business Health Fairness Act (HR1101), which is part of the multi-pronged approach to replace the Affordable Care Act and currently awaits consideration in the Senate. This bill would allow small businesses to join together to purchase health-care insurance through association health plans, similar to how larger employers provide employees with insurance. Eligible associations must be bona fide trade, industry, or professional associations, and would allow associations including NCRA to provide health insurance options to members.

In the education realm, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to study the federal government's role in education. Because of this order, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has 300 days to review the Department of Education to determine whether and how the federal government has overstepped its legal authority in K-12 schools. This executive order represents a policy shift to allow states more control over education, which falls in line with DeVos' advocacy of private education. This shift could foreshadow a retreat of federal oversight in private post-secondary education, including institutions that offer court reporting programs.

State of the States

Most of the developments in the court reporting profession occurred in the states. Several pieces of legislation relevant to the court reporting profession have moved through the legislative process in the last month. Below is a breakdown of the important developments in court reporting legislation. To stay up to date on all actions on



California AB 1660: This bill would authorize an individual or entity to engage in the business of providing or arranging for court reporters for the transcription of court proceedings if certain conditions are met. These conditions include that the individual is licensed by the board as a court reporter, that the entity is a shorthand-reporting corporation, or that the individual or entity is registered as a court reporter provider. The Assembly Business and Professions Committee amended this measure to include a requirement for the Court Reporters Board to create an online directory of registered court reporter providers. It passed the committee as amended by a 9-4 vote. This measure now awaits consideration on the Assembly floor.

California AB 1631: This bill would allow the practices of third-party contracting and unlimited, non-cash gift giving in the state. The Assembly Business and Professions Committee amended this bill to remove some controversial language creating a new class for court reporting service corporations. It ultimately failed in committee by a 2-4 vote with 10 members not voting. This bill is now ineligible for consideration during the remainder of the legislative session.



Iowa SSB 1049: This bill provides the Iowa Supreme Court with the authority to supervise the Board of Examiners of Shorthand Reporters, and to review, approve, modify, or reject board action, procedure, or decision. This bill also states that if a reporter is placed in exempt status, the reporter may transcribe or certify a proceeding that was reported while the reporter was certified as an active shorthand reporter. A subcommittee was appointed to make amendment recommendations on this issue, which has registered support from the Iowa Judicial Branch.



Nevada SB 406: This bill creates a temporary certificate of registration to engage in the practice of court reporting on a temporary basis if there is an acknowledged shortage of reporters or if the applicant is an active member of, or the spouse of an active member of, the Armed Forces of the United States. This bill also prohibits a court reporter or a court reporting firm from altering the record of a proceeding after the transcript of the proceeding has been certified, and it provides that only a certified



Texas HB 3374: This measure would require Texas CART captioners to register with the state and receive a certificate of registration to caption in the state. It also imposes education and training requirements to obtain a certificate of registration. The introduced bill was substituted in the Licensing & Administrative Procedures Committee and reported favorably as substituted on May 3. The adopted substitute states the Office of Court Administration will establish the education and training requirement for obtaining a

court reporter is authorized to perform the duties of an officer before whom depositions may be taken in any court in the state. The Senate Commerce, Labor, and Energy Committee heard this measure on April 14. The Committee amended the bill to include a definition of *business entity*.

CART captioner certificate of registration, includes the definition of *CART captioner*, and adds clarifying language stating that the requirements apply to CART captioners and the settings for providing CART. This measure now awaits consideration on the House floor.

2017 PAC Fundraiser

NCRA's Political Action Committee is an important component of the Association's government relations efforts. Through PAC contributions, NCRA is able to cultivate relationships with lawmakers on Capitol Hill, which allows the Government Relations team to articulate the profession's priorities to elected officials and forward the Association's legislative agenda in Congress. Without NCRA member contributions, these efforts would not be possible. PAC support gives NCRA members a voice in how the profession moves into the future. While many NCRA members are already ardent supporters, there are also many who have never contributed to the PAC because they don't know how their contributions help the profession. The Government Relations team is here to change that.

This year, NCRA is launching a yearlong fundraising effort based on a simple idea: If every one of the Association's 16,000 members contributed at least \$10 to the NCRA PAC during 2017, funds would more than triple while the ability to effectively advocate for the court reporting and captioning professions at the federal level would increase exponentially. Watch for future issues of this newsletter to stay informed about how your PAC contributions are being put to good use. Our next issue and subsequent issues will include a profile of an NCRA member who has supported the Association's PAC. If everyone participates, NCRA can accomplish some amazing things. Do your part and [contribute](#) today!

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