



Legislative Committee
November 6, 2017 Meeting Summary
Draft Abbreviated Version

I. Welcome and Review of Agenda

The committee chair kicked off the meeting with a welcome and review of the agenda.

II. Review Federal Legislation and Policy Landscape: Planning for the Coming Year

The Washington, D.C. lobbyist for the California Workforce Association was invited to join the committee meeting via phone. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Tax reform is dominating Congress' attention and activities. There is a lot at stake for Republicans to accomplish at least one campaign promise before the end of the year following its failure to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The activities surrounding tax reform are mirroring what took place with the repeal of the ACA, with Republicans solely supporting the effort with some dissension within the party and no support from Democrats. The shift has gone from tax reform to tax cuts.
- At the same time, the current approved spending plan and raising the debt ceiling is set to expire on December 8 and DACA/Dream Act is scheduled to expire in March as a result of the President's recent Executive Order. All of these issues have deadlines and will require Congressional action, so it is anticipated that Congress will pass another short-term Continuing Resolution and temporarily raise the debt ceiling in December until February 18, which will bring all of the issues together, including DACA, to be dealt with as a package in February.
- At the federal department level, there are still many political appointment positions left vacant awaiting the President's nomination and Senate confirmation. This makes it difficult to get anything done at the department and sub-agency level.
- Senator Warner (D-VA) and Rep. DelBene (D-WA) introduced S. 1251 to launch a pilot program for portable benefits for a mobile workforce. It is unlikely that this bill will move forward given legislators lack of understanding of the Gig economy. In addition, while Republican Senator Todd Young (R-IN) has now joined the bill as a co-author, there is still a lot more bipartisan support that will be required, especially on the House side. The only way this bill would move forward is if it's included in a legislative package with other benefits or if the pilot is funded through appropriations and launched by the Department of Labor. It will be important to approach the CA delegation, specifically House Democratic Leader Pelosi, about the impact this bill will have on the economy. A GAO study was just released about the Gig economy, in which NOVA participated. A link to the report will be forwarded to the Legislative Committee.

- Next on the agenda for Congress is infrastructure.

III. Review 2017 State Legislative Session: Planning for the Coming Year

The committee reviewed the year-end report for this year's state legislative session. Highlights of the discussion included:

- AB 1111 (Garcia): signature legislation for the California Workforce Association this year that will establish a special grant program, administered by the State Board and EDD, to serve individuals with barriers to employment. No funding stream is attached to this bill.
- AB 1149 (Arambula): an important bill that is cleanup legislation for SB 734 and would provide more flexibility in the types of services for which leveraged funds may be applied and expand the types of leveraged funds that can be applied toward the minimum 10% credit.
- AB 868 (Berman): exempts community-based organizations, such as Job Train, from the requirements enforced by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education.
- SB 1 (Beall): comprehensive infrastructure investment that creates the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program. Bill will devote \$25 million over five years to workforce development efforts around infrastructure projects. A recommendation was made to approach Sen. Beall's office regarding accessing this funding.
- This past session also included a series of bills chaptered to mitigate the White House administration's previous actions on immigration/DACA.
- Wage theft is a state and local issue that was raised by a Board member. The issue is less about the regulatory requirements that are in place, but rather the enforcement of these requirements. In addition, reaching out to workers to ensure that they understand their rights is a critical step in addressing exploitation. At the November 7 Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors meeting, the Board will be considering the wage theft issue as part of licensing businesses in unincorporated areas that could be used as a model for other jurisdictions. [After the committee meeting, the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of an Office of Labor Standards Enforcement to enforce wage laws and the development of a pilot program to enforce wage theft violations through food facility permits. Approximately 5,500 businesses are in the unincorporated areas.] NOVA works with employers to ensure they understand employer responsibilities, but will look into training job seekers about their rights as workers. The committee chair will bring additional information on wage theft at the next meeting.
- The California Workforce Association (CWA) is compiling a policy packet for the next Governor. NOVA will put forth the issues that are important to the Board for consideration in this packet. NOVA will also be encouraging CWA to propose a line item in the State budget for workforce development. A recommendation was made to create an alliance for this effort as many groups share this issue. Also, broadening the conversation to go beyond just low-income individuals will be important. Middle-income workers are also struggling to gain a foothold in this economy and community.

IV. Future Legislative Visits

This past year, NOVA hosted visits from State Assembly member Kevin Mullin, Congressman Ro Khanna, staff from Senator Feinstein's office, and Sunnyvale City Council members. In the coming months, visits will be scheduled with additional legislative representatives. In addition, NOVA will be hosting visits from new professionals hired by the California Employment Development Department. A new Sunnyvale City Manager is expected to be hired in the near future and NOVA will be reaching out to this individual to schedule a visit.

V. Wrap-up/Next Steps

Next steps for the Legislative Committee include:

- Continue to track the progress of issues that are important to the Board that include federal and state funding and broadening the conversation to go beyond just low-income populations, wage theft, immigration/DACA, and the Gig economy.
- Put together federal policy statements about federal funding and DACA/immigration that can be distributed to legislators and key decision-makers as a means to educate and inform about these issues that are important to the local workforce development community. Convene a meeting of the Legislative Committee and two members of the Board who have expressed an interest in immigration/DACA to review the research and proposed position paper.
- Compile a list of organizations that are active on immigration/DACA and explore collaborating on strategies. Employers and companies have also been publically supporting this.
- Housing is an important issue for the Board and a separate workgroup will be convened to address this issue.