



Legislative Report

By Taylor Anderson

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THE MONTH OF APRIL is often associated with spring, new beginnings and rain, lots and lots of rain. As session heads into the month of April this year, it is certainly hard to argue with that feeling. So far 2018 has been a year split into a story of two halves; the half before and the half after the primary. Before the primary the focus of most legislators and statehouse folks had been on other non-legislative issues, like the election. However, with the primary election, which happened to be on the first day of spring this year, in the rear view mirror the General Assembly will return to Springfield with a renewed and far more intense focus.

In the first three months of the year the General Assembly was scheduled to be in session for a grand total of just 17 days for each chamber. Yet, over the next two months that number is planned to be 34 days for each chamber, doubling the number of days with one less month. Furthermore, those first three months saw an abnormally low number of bills advance through the legislative process. For example, of the approximately 1,677 House Bills introduced this year nearly half of them remain in the committee they were originally assigned to.

But that was the first half of the year. With April kicking off the start of the new half we are anticipating a deluge of activity as legislators rush to try and move their bills before the deadlines begin. The first major deadline taking place is on April 13th when legislators must get their bills out of committees in their own chambers. From then until session adjourns in May

nearly every single week will have a major deadline. In an ideal world, session would be a month's long process of pruning down the thousands of bills introduced into a few hundred workable ones and although session is never that ideal, typically the process still has at least some time to work. This year it's going to be much more akin to trying to drink out of a fire hose as hundreds of bills are attempted to be moved within weeks.

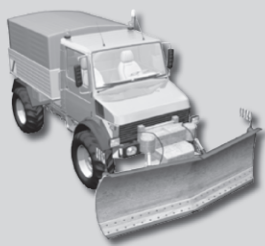
Yet the downpour is here. We know that and luckily anticipated it. These past few months TOI has been working with staff, legislators and other local government groups to try and clear as much out of the way as best we could. Laying the ground work on a multitude of issues, getting ready for what ensures to be a mad dash to the finish line. This matters for groups like TOI because currently we are tracking upwards of 70 bills which affect townships, far too many in a negative fashion.

But rain doesn't last forever and while May might not bring us flowers in the capitol it will bring us a pared-down agenda. In next month's issue we will be sure to cover the remaining bills as we head into the final stretch and we will need your help with as we make a final push to advocate for the township agenda. Help with filling out online witness slips for committee, or calling into legislative offices to express your position. Each and every bit helps.

*Reminder: if you are able please attend Townships Topics Day is April 25th. Please join us.



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