

**RISE Delaware™ Legislative Update: Senate Executive Committee Hearing  
April 24, 2024**

**Senate Executive Committee Hearing (April 24, 2024): HB 281 and HB 282 voted out of committee**

Friends,

Senator Bryan Townsend, who co-vice chaired the RHBAS, led the Senate Executive hearing yesterday at the invitation of Senator Sokola, the Committee Chair. The RISE Board - Lisa Diller, Karen Peterson, Mary Graham and (our newest member) Robert Hall – spoke on behalf of RISE in support of HB 281 (Medicare Supplement guarantee for all current and future retirees) and HB 282 (SEBC changes). Rep. Paul Baumbach attended but, in keeping with custom, did not address the bills.

If you recall, House Amendment 3 attached to HB 281 would permit the SEBC to adopt Medicare Advantage (MA) as an option for future hires. Mary Graham pointed out, in supporting procedural protections before any such adoption of MA, that there is an overlooked statutory provision that the SEBC glaringly failed to follow in February 2022. That provision requires the SEBC to take into account, when adopting a health insurance plan, the interests of State employees and pensioners - not just the interests of the State. We don't want that provision to be ignored again.

Lynda Hastings and Becky Scarborough spoke compellingly in support of the bills in person. And Steve LePage was his usual insightful voice online. To give just one quote, Lynda commented that,, “By its actions in creating this recent Medicare Advantage fiasco for retirees, the SEBC has shown that it would benefit from additional oversight by the Legislature - oversight before the fact and not afterward.” Together the different perspectives of the RISE supporters did a nice job of painting a picture of the importance of the bills and having procedural protections.

Both bills were voted out of Committee and it looks like they will pass the Senate, although there are final amendments to come from Sen. Townsend when the bills go for a vote before the full Senate. It sounds like his amendments will strip the APA requirement from House Amendment 3 to HB 281. We don't need the APA requirement to be included, but would really like at least some good procedural protections before any adoption of MA, even as a secondary option (unlike the last go-round in 2022). The community of State employees and retirees is going to need to stay engaged and be alert in the future.

Senator Townsend expressed his understanding of the importance of meaningful public engagement on the issue of health care benefits. It sounds like he plans, in lieu of a requirement that the APA be followed before adoption of MA, to include an amendment to HB 282 that would require the opportunity at the SEBC for public comment BEFORE any Request for Proposals (RFP) would go out for MA. This would be an important and

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meaningful step at the SEBC that we have encouraged. As you may recall, the SEBC did not even see, let alone vote on, the RFP before it went out for Medicare Advantage - pretty remarkable!

We will let you know when the bills are scheduled to be voted on by the Senate. There will be no opportunity for public comment at that point.

Regards,  
Elisa Diller, President  
Mary Graham, Legal Liaison  
Karen Peterson, Legislative Liaison

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**RISE Delaware: Retirees Investing in Social Equity Delaware**  
Elisa Diller, President

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