



# STATE EMPLOYEES' INSURANCE BOARD

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## Legislative Update

By: Sally Corley

The Alabama Legislature returned to Montgomery this week after a two-week Spring Break. After a long debate, the Senate passed the Education Trust Fund Budget early this week. Both the General Fund and the Education budgets have now passed the chamber where they originated this session. Now each budget awaits action by the second chamber.

There is a special section at the bottom of this update dedicated to the four bills introduced this session that relate to ABA Therapy coverage for Autism. Please note that the schedule next week will be slightly different than usual because the House Judiciary Committee will be conducting impeachment hearings.

Below is a brief description of some of the bills we are tracking this session. Please know these weekly legislative updates are meant to keep you informed of legislation that may affect you, and they are provided to demonstrate the SEIB's commitment to the goal of providing the best health care coverage available at an affordable rate for our members.

### **BUDGET:**

#### **HB155/SB150 - FY18 GENERAL FUND BUDGET:**

The biggest item on our legislative agenda each year is the General Fund budget. The current version of the General Fund Budget funds SEIB at the requested rate of \$930 per active employee per month. It is the intent of the Legislature that the SEIB does not increase the out of pocket costs for members. Funding for health insurance provides a benefit that helps all employees equally and also provides a benefit for retirees. We are hopeful that the Legislature will keep this rate for SEIB. Don't forget that if you qualify for "other employer health insurance coverage" through a spouse or another job, please contact your [SEIB Advisor](#) today to find out about savings opportunities that are immediately available to you.

**STATUS:** Passed the House and awaits action by Senate committee.

### **HOUSE:**

#### **HB177 Pettus – Combine SEIB and PEEHIP Boards:**

Combines SEIB and PEEHIP under a new Public Employee Health Insurance Board (PEHIB). This is a 94-page bill that creates a new Board to administer both the State Employees' and Public Education Employees' health insurance plans, and it changes references in the Code to SEIB and PEEHIP to read as PEHIB.

**STATUS:** Introduced in the House.

#### **HB356 Patterson – Retirement Buyout/PLOP:**

This bill adds the option of a partial lump sum at the time of retirement not to exceed the sum of 2 years of monthly payments. It also allows former employees who are vested but not yet eligible to draw

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retirement to opt for a lump sum that is equal to the present value of their total retirement allowance. Choosing this option will not impact eligibility for health insurance coverage in retirement.

**STATUS:** Awaits third reading in the House as substituted and amended.

## **SENATE:**

### **SJR52 Marsh – Budget Reform Task Force:**

Extends the duration of the Budget Reform Committee to the fifth legislative day of 2018, and requires an interim report from the Task Force on the last day of the 2017 session. The Task Force will meet monthly. The Committee has gathered a lot of data on state agencies and the budget, and they now have additional time to review this information.

**STATUS:** Enacted - Act number 2017-63.

### **SB114/HB163 Pittman/McMillan – Community Colleges:**

This bill gives the Community College system corporate status and contains language to ensure all current and future employees maintain their current benefit structure. The main office employees have SEIB coverage while most community college employees have PEEHIP coverage. An amendment was added to both bills in committee to make sure that this benefit structure remains the same.

**STATUS:** SB114 awaits third reading in the House, and HB163 awaits action by Senate Committee on Education and Youth Affairs.

## **AUTISM BILLS:**

### **SB57 Allen:**

This bill appropriates \$3 million to the Department of Mental Health from the ETF, and specifies that the Department of Mental Health is to administer an ABA therapy program for children ages birth to 9 who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The cost is not to exceed \$40,000 annually per child.

**STATUS:** Carried over to the call of the chair in Senate Health Committee.

### **HB404 JD Williams:**

Essentially the same as SB57 in that it appropriates \$3 million to the Department of Mental Health from the ETF, and specifies that the Department of Mental Health is to administer an ABA therapy program for children ages birth to 9 diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The cost is not to exceed \$40,000 annually per child. Uses slightly different language than SB57, and adds the requirement that ABA Therapy is to be performed by those licensed by the Alabama Behavior Analyst Licensing Board.

**STATUS:** Introduced in the House.

### **SB164 Whatley:**

This bill requires mandated coverage of ABA Therapy for qualifying children ages nine and under with an annual cap of \$36,000. In addition to requiring coverage to develop and restore the functioning status of an individual, this bill also adds treatment to maintain the functioning status of the patient.

**STATUS:** Introduced in the Senate.

### **HB284 Patterson:**

This bill is similar to SB164 in that it requires mandated coverage of ABA Therapy with no age limit and no annual cap on usage. In addition to requiring coverage to develop and restore the functioning status

of an individual, this bill also adds treatment to maintain the functioning status of the patient. This bill specifically requires coverage by SEIB and PEEHIP and removes the annual cap of \$36,000.

**STATUS:** Had a public hearing in the House Committee on Insurance with no vote.