

State News for NSPE Members

West Virginia Permits Tax-Free Savings for Licensing, Certification Fees

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice signed legislation on March 19 allowing residents to save and invest funds to cover the costs associated with pursuing a trade or occupation and for business startups.

The Jumpstart Savings Act ([H.B. 2001](#)) authorizes tax-free contributions up to \$25,000 each year to a state-managed savings account for the following expenses:

1) The purchase of tools, equipment, or supplies to complete an apprenticeship program or earn an associate's degree or certificate for a specified occupation or profession, 2) Fees for required certification or licensure to practice a trade or occupation, and 3) Costs incurred that are necessary to establish and operate a business for a specified occupation or profession.

A savings account can be opened by an individual with a minimum deposit of \$25 beginning July 1, 2022 with a single person named as a beneficiary. If the designated beneficiary is a West Virginia resident under the age of 18, the state treasurer will contribute \$100 from the Jumpstart Savings Expense Fund. This contribution will also apply if an account has been opened within 180 days after a beneficiary has enrolled in an apprenticeship or educational program. Qualified employers can make matching contributions to an employee's account and receive a nonrefundable tax credit up to \$5,000 per year for each employee.

Tax on Professional Services Proposed

The West Virginia Senate passed an amended income tax bill ([H.B. 3300](#)) by an 18-16 vote on April 7. This bill includes a statewide sales tax increase from 6% to 8%.

The legislation [has raised concerns](#) because it could place a 3% tax on professional services like accounting, architecture, engineering, and legal services.

Nitro-St. Albans Bridge Project Kicks Off

West Virginia state leaders recently [held a groundbreaking](#) for a \$225 million West Virginia DOT construction project involving the Nitro-St. Albans Bridge.



(Credit:WVDOT)

Constructing a new bridge over the Kanawah River is part of the [DOT's I-64 multi-year improvement project](#) that will widen I-64 from the US 35/I-64 Interchange to just east of the Nitro Interchange. The goal is to widen I-64 to improve traffic volume capacity, enhance safety, and support continued economic growth in the area. According to the DOT, the bridge now carries approximately 70,000 vehicles per day. An increase in traffic volume has resulted in congestion, sudden stops, and collisions along I-64.

Commuters recently [expressed excitement and nervousness](#) about the improvement project with a 2023 projected completion date. Once complete, the new bridge will be called the Donald M. Legg Memorial Bridge.

Stay up to date on legislative issues through the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#) .

We Need Your Input on Proposed Changes to Engineers' Creed

The [Engineers' Creed Survey](#) will be open until 9:00 pm EDT on April 23. As outlined in previous communications, NSPE is collecting feedback on proposed modifications to update outdated language without altering the philosophical underpinnings of the organization. The hope is that the use of broad, inclusive

language will help all engineers within our organization incorporate their personal beliefs and experiences to better the profession.

Thank you to members who have already completed the survey. Please note: If you previously completed the survey, you will not be able to take it again.

If you have not had a chance to provide feedback, we encourage you to do so. Your input is important.

Thank you for your assistance, and thank you for being a member of NSPE.

Watch NSPE's New YouTube Vlog on Legislative and Regulatory Issues

Episode 3 of NSPE's new [Committee Corner](#) vlog covers the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the March 24 markup of S.914 - the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021.

Ask Your Senators to Back Drinking and Wastewater Infrastructure

Professional Engineers play an integral role in the development and maintenance of the nation's infrastructure, including infrastructure that provides clean drinking water and safe wastewater treatment.

Every community in the United States needs clean drinking water, and wastewater treatment facilities that keep the community clean and safe. The Senate is expected to vote this week on a bill to fund these vital systems.

[Ask Your Senators to Vote "Yes" on S.914](#)

S. 914, The Drinking and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021, ensures that communities have both, by providing much-needed funding for our drinking and wastewater systems. The bill authorizes funding for the Safe Drinking Water Act programs, and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. It also establishes programs that direct services and funding to low-income and under-served communities, and allocates money to respond to cyber threats. Share your engineering expertise with your lawmakers, and ask them to support this crucial funding.

S. 914 was voted out of the Senate Environment and Public Works committee with unanimous, bipartisan support. And in a press release dated April 15th, Majority Leader Schumer said the bill could be voted on by the full Senate as early as this

week.

[Ask Your Senators to Vote "Yes" on S.914](#)

Please take a moment to contact your Senators, express your support, and ask them to vote "yes" on S. 914.

Society Backs House Bills on Engineering Education and 529 Savings Plans

NSPE supports the WORKER Act ([H.R. 594](#)), which establishes a \$20 million grant program to make specialized engineering programs available in K–12 schools. The bill was introduced by Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Rep. Susan Wild (D-PA) to improve worker training, retention, and advancement.

The grants will assist with teaching students the overall analytical and experimental approaches used in engineering and engineering technology; and increase participation of under-represented student groups in the engineering and engineering technology pipeline.

NSPE continues to advocate for passage of the Freedom to Invest in Tomorrow's Workforce Act ([H.R. 2171](#)). This legislation was successfully reintroduced by Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) with support from the Professional Certification Coalition. The bill allows the beneficiaries of tax-advantaged 529 education savings plans to pay the costs associated with obtaining or maintaining postsecondary credentials—including professional licensing and private certification—with funds from their plan. As introduced, the legislation supports both new and existing PE licenses and NICET certifications. A companion bill, [S. 905](#) , was introduced by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN).

NSPE will work with the Professional Certification Coalition leadership to help move these bills through the legislative process.

Members can view and participate in advocacy campaigns at the [NSPE Advocacy Center](#) .

Scammers Target Licensed Professionals

Scammers typically pose as someone from your bank, the IRS, or tech-support services to steal sensitive information and money, but these bad actors have added a twist to their schemes. Now, authorities are warning professional licensees that they are becoming prime targets for fraud.

In March, Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge issued a fraud alert to licensees and state licensing boards. Scammers are calling license holders with claims that their licenses are under investigation and at risk of being suspended if they don't make an immediate payment. The license holder's caller ID may even display the legitimate licensing office's phone number that has been spoofed by the scam callers.

These latest scams have increased for nurses and other licensed medical professionals, but they aren't limited to a particular state, region, or profession. In February, the Maryland Department of Labor issued an alert about phishing emails targeting licensees. The Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs warned licensees in July 2020 about individuals posing as state officials or law enforcement agents to intimidate potential victims into divulging personal information. And as early as 2019, the California Department of Consumer Affairs issued a fraud scheme alert to licensees of the agency's boards and bureaus, including the board that licenses design professionals.

Take Advantage of NSPE's Spring Webinars



Throughout April and May, NSPE will host a webinar every Wednesday starting at 2 p.m. EST. The webinars are available to members for \$99 (\$129 for nonmembers) and will include an online discussion and a 10-question quiz for the sessions to qualify for continuing education credit.

April 28: [Turn Your Ideas Into Gold - A Guide to Intellectual Property](#)

May 5: [Engineering Ethics: Canon IV - Fidelity to Employers/Clients](#)

May 12: [Engineering Leadership Success By Design - Emotional Intelligence and Neuroscience as Career Differentiators](#)

May 19: [Energy Storage: The Other Half of Renewable Energies](#)

May 26: [Catapult Your Win Rate by 50%](#)

[Register now.](#)

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