



Legislative Committee Report  
WSRT Annual Conference, September 20, 2019  
Sandra Helinski, RTR, QM, MR, Committee Chairperson

“Survival” is the theme for this summary of the Legislative Committee’s activities this past year. Last September, we were highly involved in defending the professional status of the registered radiologic technologist. To review, the 2016 state budget almost eliminated the Radiography Examining Board, created by Act 106, 2009, the licensure law. The Radiography Examining Board is important because it enables radiologic technologists themselves to make the decisions for their unique role in medical care for the first time in state history. As a result of providing testimony at budgetary hearings and strong opposition by other affected professions, this cryptic measure was struck from the budget. The provision was replaced however, by the Occupational License Review Study, mandated by Governor Walker. The goal of the comprehensive two-year study of all licensed professions was to eliminate as many licenses as possible to remove so-called “barriers to employment.” During this period, we had developed a relationship with the former Secretary of the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS), Laura Gutierrez, who was in charge of the study. On December 28, 2018, the results of the report were published. 28 licenses had been eliminated, but that of the radiologic technologist and the limited x-ray machine operator permit remained intact, validating their worth to public health, safety and welfare. As a result of strong advocacy with the help of the ASRT, the ARRT, and our policy advisors of Blumenfeld and Associates, safe and effective radiologic care and effective diagnoses for the people of Wisconsin were upheld by the services of the educated, competent, and registered radiologic technologist. The professional status of the radiologic technologist had **survived**.

At this time, it is pleasing to report that there are no **known** state actions jeopardizing our licensure status. The change in governorship in Madison may have tempered the anti-regulatory climate, but it never can be assumed it will last. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has targeted Wisconsin as one of its eleven states under examination for licensure reform. According to its latest overview of its licensure issues, it is concerned that “differences and disparities in occupational licensing laws across states can create barriers for those looking to enter the labor market and make it harder for workers to relocate across state lines.” The NCSL contends that “military spouses and families, immigrants with work authorization, people with criminal records and unemployed and dislocated workers are affected disproportionately by the requirements and variances of occupational licensing.” As a bipartisan organization, the

leadership party of our or any state may have no effect on the recommendations of this national policy-forming organization, which will have to be continually monitored.

On the federal level, HR 1970 and Senate Bill SB 1544, the Medicare Access to Radiologic Care Act (MARCA) was introduced by Representative Michael Doyle (D-Pennsylvania) on March 28 and by Senator John Boozman (R- Arkansas) on May 20, 2019. This bill would require Medicare to fully reimburse the services of the Radiologist Assistant in any health care setting they are provided. This bill is struggling to gain traction with only 27 cosponsors in the House and only 4 Senators signed on. The ASRT encourages us to write our federal state legislators, easily done through their website to help put the RA on par with other physician assistant providers.

On July 31, I was joined by Mr. Blumenfeld at the most recent meeting of the Radiography Examining Board in Madison at the new DSPTS facility. This meeting included a hearing updating the Wisconsin practice standards of radiologic technology to the most recently published by the ASRT. I testified in favor of these changes and for the proposed clarification of the ALARA standards on behalf of the WSRT. As I sat in the meeting room, it became clear that this meeting of state employees and involved radiology professionals would not be happening had the WSRT not risked a major portion of its net worth to make the radiologic technologist a licensed professional in our state. As a person directly involved in the legislative process that created the Radiography Examining Board through the licensure law, a sense of pride was felt as I witnessed this assembly of people working to uphold the gold standard of radiologic care in Wisconsin. The existence of our state board represents the silent advocacy that the WSRT stands for each and every day--- proof that the Wisconsin Society of Radiologic Technologists matters—not only for the radiologic technologist, but for our patients. When a colleague asks you why he or she should be a WSRT member—your answer is plain and simple--**advocacy!** It prevents other health care providers from directing our profession and even performing our jobs. This intangible benefit cannot be taken for granted. Action on all of our part is essential to uphold the radiologic technologist as the **gatekeeper to diagnosis**. The forces are out there to change that, whether at our own workplaces or on the state and nationwide scope. WSRT membership is the first step toward maintaining our autonomy as the sole experts of medical imaging. The Radiography Examining Board is looking for interested technologists. The WSRT is looking for motivated technologists to be part of its leadership. The opportunities are plentiful for advocacy and involvement. As for our state society, the Wisconsin Society of Radiologic Technologists, our patients and our profession, it is a matter of **survival**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Helinski  
WSRT Legislative Committee Chairperson