What are the top legislative and regulatory issues facing professional engineers in 2021?

Defending the Need for Professional Licensure
NSPE advocates for the protection of the engineering license against all threats, including attempts to take advantage of COVID-19-related emergency actions and make relaxed licensing requirements permanent. While organizations like the American Legislative Exchange Council and the Institute for Justice continue their attack on professional licensing, NSPE is here to fight back and will continue to promote rigorous licensing laws that protect public health, safety, and welfare, such as advocating for the elimination of licensing exemptions and improvements to the existing comity structure.

Public Health and Safety During the COVID-19 Pandemic
NSPE stands at the ready to support its members and the entire professional engineering community in times of uncertainty from the coronavirus pandemic. Our team monitors COVID-related legislation and executive orders that affect licensure, define “essential workers” and make other changes relevant to our members. As PEs rise to the challenges posed by this pandemic, NSPE is proud to champion the engineering profession and herald its accomplishments, such as the development of ventilators, solutions for protective equipment shortages, and improved sanitation systems.

Sustainable Modernization of Infrastructure
The new presidential administration and new congressional sessions have both expressed interest in passing large-scale infrastructure plans. NSPE will continue to advocate for our legislators to fund sustainable and resilient infrastructure and prioritize adaptability and sustainability regarding climate change as part of their infrastructure plan. The need to address the nation’s infrastructure should be an issue on which there is bipartisan agreement, and this remains a key issue for NSPE throughout the year.

Achieving Universal Licensing
NSPE predicts that the issue of license mobility and “universal licensing” bills will be a key item for legislatures this year. In the final days of the 2020 legislative sessions, we have seen actions in Ohio and Michigan to make license mobility easier for licensees traveling into those states. This has become such a priority that work began ahead of the 2021 legislative sessions in some states. In Wyoming, the legislature is already working on a bill to increase license mobility for military spouses. NSPE will continue to monitor these types of bills and stand at the ready to advocate for mobility policies that fit the needs of the engineering community and don’t create unnecessary burdens or barriers.