



What's Up in the Legislature

(May 19, 2007)

It has been an interesting week.

Of particular importance is the fact that the Governor signed HB 2681 (utility assistance; qualified fuel fund) on May 17. It has not yet been assigned a chapter number.

HB 2681 repeals statutes relating to the Utility Assistance Fund (UAF) and requires utility companies to transfer all abandoned deposits to a Qualified Fuel Fund Entity (Entity) for the purposes of assisting eligible Arizona residents in making deposits, repairs, and replacement of utility related appliances or systems. It is hope that this funding process will make collaboration for emergency utility needs easier for our Conferences.

The free joint conference committee on SB 1446 (deferred presentment transactions; verification) meets Monday at 11:30 a.m. in SHR 1. Senator McCune Davis has told Kathy Jorgenson that she has an amendment for the conference committee to consider. However, we will probably not know what is in the amendment until Monday. Senate Members of the conference committee are Chuck Gray, Debbie McCune Davis, and Tom O'Halleran. House members are Bill Konopnicki, Chad Campbell, and Marian McClure. I confused Chad Campbell with Clovis Campbell Jr. in an earlier e-mail. You will also recall that Representative McClure has started an initiative to repeal the laws allowing the payday loan companies to do business in Arizona.

The House failed to get sufficient votes for its budget for passage, and reportedly will try again this week, possibly on Thursday. Look for some arm twisting especially on Reps Farnsworth and Robson.

On the other hand the Senate passed out a bi-partisan budget that the Governor has indicated she will sign. The House 1st Read those bills on May 17.

Also of interest, but on the national level is the compromise immigration legislation worked out among Senators Ted Kennedy, Jon Kyl and the White House. Senate Majority Leader held off discussion of immigration for a week to allow them to work out a compromise, and debate on the bill is expected to start on Monday May 21. However with backing from Kennedy and Kyl and the fact that many of the details have yet to be worked out, it is likely that the bill will get through the Senate. Problems are predicted for it when it reaches the House.