



What's Up in the Legislature

(2007 May 26,)

Neither the House nor the Senate have any action or work noted in their schedules for next week. It is presumed that they will be working on budgets. The Senate version of the budget provides \$48 million more than the House for health and welfare programs. The House uses that money for corporate tax cuts. Are your representatives in favor of the House version?

HB 2681 (utility assistance; qualified fuel fund) is now Chapter 218 of the Laws of 2007. It becomes effective 90 days after the Legislature adjures Sine Die. Unfortunately, Sine Die looks like it will easily run far into June.

The Free Joint Conference Committee on SB 1446 (deferred presentment transactions; verification) met last Monday.

Senator Gray, Senate co-chair, offered an amendment that provided for contracts in English rather than Spanish and English. His amendment also provided a sunset date of 2018. Senator McCune Davis countered with a substitute amendment that required bilingual signs at the payday loan centers, and kept the current sunset provision of 2010.

The McCune Davis amendment passed on a 2-1 vote. McCune Davis' and Tom O'Halleran voted for it with the nay vote coming from Gray.

On the House side Rep. McClure voted for the McCune amendment, and Reps Konopnicki and Chad Campbell voted in the negative. So the amendment failed to get enough House votes and died.

It is our understanding that the House Republicans will not vote for a bill that has a 2010 repeal of the payday loan provisions. However, the House Dems will not vote for a bill that doesn't have a repealer, though not necessarily 2010.

Both sides agree that the consumer protection provisions in SB 1446 are better than the present law. However, they want to work with the State's financial institutions, i.e.. banks, credit unions, and S&Ls, to come up with a small loan act. Rep. Campbell cited Oregon's law that he says will drive the payday loans out without killing them because they won't be able to compete.

They hope the conference committee can come up with something acceptable when it meets again next week. No date has yet been set.

Lucy informed us that National VOP congratulated all who contacted their congressmen in behalf of HR 1427:

H.R. 1427, the Federal Housing Finance Reform Act of 2007, was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives on May 22 by a vote of 313-104. The bill creates an Affordable Housing Fund of about \$600 million a year. For the first year, the money will go to Louisiana and Mississippi to rebuild rental housing affordable for very low and extremely low income people. After that, the funds will become a dedicated source of revenue for the future National Housing Trust Fund.

Our Arizona Representatives who voted in favor of the bill are Giffords, Grijalva, Mitchell, Pastor, and Renzi. The naysayers were Franks, Flake, and Shadegg. Trent Franks should not be confused with Barney Franks of Massachusetts who voted for the bill.