



## What's Up in the Legislature

(March 1, 2008)

This is the week that was supposed to mark the halfway point of the Session. However, both houses allowed an additional week to hear bills originating in their houses. This brought out many bills that should have been allowed to die with the deadline. Oh, I nearly forgot. There is no budget yet although January tax returns ran 16% lower than a year ago. Nearly all the Senate committees are taking this week off.

### **Eddie Sisson warns us that:**

House Appropriations Committee Chairman, Rep. Russell Pearce, R-18, told our reporter yesterday he plans to hear Rep. Judy Burges' H2678 (welfare recipients; drug testing) in his committee next week, even though the bill would likely cost the state at least \$3.4 million and reportedly does not have the blessing of leadership. One Republican source said leadership explicitly told Burges before the session not to run the bill, because it would be controversial and would likely garner negative press. However, Pearce said yesterday he will "absolutely" hear it at the March 5 committee meeting, because the state should not be subsidizing the drug habits of the impoverished. "If you're going to get free stuff ..., then the taxpayer, I think, has the right to expect you to be a law-abiding citizen," he said. A similar drug testing program in Michigan, implemented in 1999, was declared unconstitutional by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in 2003. Research in several states where this type of legislation has been proposed has found that drug use by welfare recipients is no higher than that of the general population. Rep. Burges has visited SVdP's Watkins Road facility.

HB2571 (low income housing; property tax) By Rep. Driggs is up in House Human Resources at 9 a.m. on Thursday March 6. This mimics federal law giving landlords a reduced rate that will encourage them to build facilities, and hopefully pass the savings on to their renters.

House Approps on March 5 at 1:30 p.m. in HHR 1 will also hear HCR 2678 (legislative right to reduce appropriations) By Reps Adams, Biggs, and Farnsworth. The bill amends the State Constitution to give "the Legislature the right to preserve and protect the citizens' right to fiscal responsibility and a balanced state budget, and notwithstanding any other provision of this constitution, **the legislature may reduce any appropriation or spending requirement, whether enacted by the legislature or by initiative or referendum.**"

Please oppose this bill.

The House committee on Counties, Municipalities and Military Affairs meets Tuesday, March 4, 2008 in Room HHR 5 at 1:30 P.M. to hear HCR 2064 (local enforcement; immigration) By Representative Nelson if it is reassigned to CMMA

It requires all state and local government officials to enforce federal immigration laws.

Rep. Nelson chairs this committee.

Two other immigrant bills were heard in House Judiciary last week. Fortunately both were HELD.

HB 2624 (illegal aliens; public benefits; reimbursement) By Representatives Pearce, Burges, Groe requires illegal aliens employed in Arizona to reimburse the state for the costs of public benefits they receive as well as costs incurred by criminal actions brought against them.

HB 2625 (illegal aliens; commercial transactions) By Representative Pearce prohibits landlords from knowingly or recklessly renting or leasing dwellings to illegal aliens, authorizes the forfeiture of property used to transport or house a person who is in Arizona in violation of 8 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1325, and allows the denial, suspension or revocation of licenses issued to dealers or sales finance companies that have been convicted of or that are engaging in certain illegal activities.

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