



What's Up in the Legislature

(February 21, 2009)

Mary Jo Pitzl in the [Az Republic](#) reports that 39 Republicans have given their pledge not to raise taxes. That's all but four in the Senate, and all but ten in the House. That means they have promised to "oppose and vote against any and all efforts to increase taxes," according to the pledge.

The number is significant in light of Gov. Jan Brewer's trial balloon for a temporary tax hike to carry the state through tough budget times. These members, arguably, would be bound by their pledge not to vote for a tax increase or to refer it to the voters for a decision.

While it takes a two-thirds vote of the Legislature to raise taxes, it only takes a simple majority to refer something to the ballot, so the 39 wouldn't be enough to stop a ballot referral. However, since President Burns and Speaker Adams have signed the pledge, they are in a position to stop any tax increase move immediately.

That could make the chances of the Governor's trial balloon on taxes and restrictions somewhat moot. Word has it, however, that Legislators who have signed the anti-tax pledge are in support of a special election to allow the Legislature to access funds in the voter-protected initiatives (AHCCCS and First Things First are both funded by us of tobacco tax in voter approved initiatives).

Three AZ House committees are holding hearings on the federal stimulus package (American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) which has allocated \$4 billion to Arizona. There has been enormous discussion about its impacts., many of which will be long term. It should not be overlooked that the stimulus package contains significant funding for safety net programs such as Medicaid, food stamps (SNAP), unemployment benefits, rental assistance and homelessness to help low income and middle class residents weather the economic storm in the short term. Governor Brewer will have the final decision on acceptance and use of the federal monies.

BIILLS – SVdP wins

HB 2091 (charitable organizations; solicitations; disclosures) is up in House Rules on Monday. It should go to the Floor shortly thereafter.

HB2269 (landlords; tenants; foreclosures) passed Government on a vote of 9-0
Frank Antenori Y Chad Campbell Y Tom Chabin Y Adam Driggs Y David Gowan Y
Warde V. Nichols Y Anna Tovar Y Steve B. Montenegro Y Sam Crump Y This bill
requires notification of tenants as well as return of deposits when a rented property is
sold or goes into foreclosure

BILLS - SVdP losses

HB2237 (AHCCCS; verification of eligibility) passed Health and Human Resources
party-line vote 6-2-1.
Edward Ableser P Frank Antenori Y Tom Boone Y David Bradley N Doris Goodale Y
Phil Lopes N Rick Murphy Y Steve Court Y Nancy K. Barto Y

HB2238 (AHCCCS; DES; fraud reduction) passed Health and Human Resources on the
same party-line.
Edward Ableser N Frank Antenori Y Tom Boone Y David Bradley N Doris Goodale Y
Phil Lopes N Rick Murphy Y Steve Court Y Nancy K. Barto Y

SVdP opposes both these bills because they had large amounts of bureaucratic red-tape to
agencies that are being hit with layoffs and furloughs.

Budget Hearing

There will be a Joint Senate and House Appropriations meeting on Monday (2/23) for a
hearing on the 2009-10 DES budget.