

# *Voice of the Poor*

July, 2009

[www.voiceofthepoor.org](http://www.voiceofthepoor.org)

[www.stvincentdepaul.net](http://www.stvincentdepaul.net)

## **First Session of the 49<sup>th</sup> Arizona Legislature 2010 Arizona State Budget**

### ***Governor vetoes “fatally flawed” budget and calls a Special Session***

The Legislature passed a budget in the early morning of July 1 trying to prevent a government shutdown. Five hours later, Governor Brewer line item vetoed major parts of the Legislative budget and called for a Special Session to begin on July 6. From the governor’s press release:

*The legislative budget ignores my consistently expressed goals and instead incorporates devastating cuts to education, public safety, and our state’s most vital health services for the frail. In particular, the package of bills is shortsighted in that it set up an enormous revenue shortfall that will severely harm our State’s future.*

The Governor’s Proclamation calls for the Special Session to address two things:

- 1. The adjustments necessary to address the state budget for the entire fiscal year 2009-2010.*
- 2. Imposition of a temporary tax for the purpose of raising state revenues for primary and secondary education, health and human services and public safety expenditures.*

The 2009 budget cuts resulted In the following decreases in services to Arizona’s poor and most vulnerable:

- TANF families had their benefit levels cut by 20%,
- JOBS programs was cut substantially,
- A child care waiting list was created.
- Domestic violence shelters support was cut.
- Elderly and people with disabilities had their co-payments for prescription drugs eliminated.

Child Protective Services funding was cut in 2009 preventing investigation of 100% of legitimate referrals. Only through Governor Brewer’s intervention and the use of federal stimulus money was funding restored to CPS

## **You can help get a better budget adopted for Arizona!**

- Call or e-mail Governor Brewer and thank her for standing up for budget expenditures essential for Arizona's most vulnerable. The Governor's office number is (602) 542-4331 or e-mail her through her contact page <http://azgovernor.gov/Contact.asp>
- Call or e-mail your State Senator and two State Representatives and let them know you support Governor Brewer's position on the budget. ([www.azleg.gov](http://www.azleg.gov) and click on "Find my Legislators").

### **What about the bills?**

- 1133 bills were introduced
- 211 bills were passed and sent to the Governor
- 101 Memorials or Resolutions were introduced
- 12 Memorials or Resolutions were sent to the Secretary of State

*200 bills were run through the Legislature in the final 48 hours, by-passing the committee system and opportunity for public input.*

*The bill creating the category of felony trespasser for undocumented persons, opposed by Voice of the Poor, was defeated in the House in the wee hours of July 1. A similar bill was vetoed last year. Thank you to those of you who took time to contact your legislators on this issue.*

The Governor has 10 days (excluding Sundays) to sign or veto a bill; if she neither signs nor vetoes a bill, the bill will become law without her signature. Voice of the Poor will provide information about bills that become law in the August newsletter.

Items that were NOT passed NOR sent to the Governor included:

- A sales tax increase to be sent to the voters (HCR 2037)
- The Voter Protection; Temporary Budgetary Suspension to be sent to the voters (SCR 1009)

- A change to a flat tax on income (HB 2653)

Special thanks to Vincentian Tom Finnerty for constant monitoring of the budget proceedings and legislative action and his weekly reports. Thank you to Tim Schmaltz of PAFCO and Sandy Carpenter of First Things First for final summaries of legislative action.

**Voice of the Poor meets monthly during the legislative session. We will have a wrap up meeting on Wednesday, July 16 at 3:30 at Vincentian Support Services, 420 W. Watkins Road, Phoenix. No meeting in August. Meetings are open. For information or to place an item on the agenda, contact Lucy Howell at [howishome@aol.com](mailto:howishome@aol.com)**