

LEGISLATIVE WEEKLY REPORT for period ending 01 02 2010
By Tom Finnerty

The Forty-ninth Legislature Second Regular Session will convene on January 11, 2010.

Legislature

There are some changes from the First Session, especially in the Senate. There is new Senate Leadership. Steve Pierce is the new Majority Whip, replacing Pamela Gorman, and Barbara Leff is the new President Pro Tempore replacing the inestimable Thayer Verschoor.

And the award for magical disappearances goes to Ron Gould's old Retirement and Rural Affairs Committee. You will recall that the Committee was abolished when Senator Gould consistently voted against placing the sales tax increase on the ballot. Retirement bills will most likely return to the Finance Committee, and rural development will disappear.

President Burns will also reverse his policy requiring all bills to be held until a budget has been determined.

Speaking of budgets

The Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) in its December report on the state's fiscal position reported the following:

General Fund spending exceeded revenues by \$264 million in November. Fiscal year-to date, General Fund revenues are \$2.68 billion

compared to spending of \$4.60 billion, for a 5-month deficit of \$(1.92) billion.

November was another poor revenue collection month. November General Fund revenue collections were \$422.1 million. Excluding budgeted transfers and Urban Revenue Sharing, November collections were (15.7)% below the prior year, and \$(81.0) million below the budget forecast. (See Table 1 below and Table 6 on page 6 for more information.)

Year-to-date, revenues are (17.6)% below the prior year, and \$(459.5) million below the budget forecast.

In addition, JLBC also reported that

These lending costs increased when Moody's downgraded the state's credit rating from Aa3 to A1 on December 23rd. Standard & Poor's rating also fell from AA to AA-minus. This downgrading automatically increased the interest rate paid under the existing commercial lending contract by as much as 15 basis points (0.15%). On an annual basis, this increase would cost up to an additional \$1 million in interest on commercial borrowing.

The other likely General Fund impact will be a higher borrowing cost for the state's forthcoming \$735 million asset lease-back issuance.

Politics

By now you have heard that HB 2008 has resulted in a significant decline last month in the numbers of suspected undocumented immigrants applying for assistance from DES and AHCCCS. The decrease in applications for benefits in the worst downturn in Arizona history could be the result of fear of deportation by parents while in the process of making benefit applications for U.S. born children. (HB 2008 requires DES caseworkers refer an applicant for further investigation if

that individual indicates they are here illegally either in writing or verbally.)

U.S.- born children are eligible for benefits such as food stamps (SNAP), AHCCCS and TANF.

Matt Jewett of Children's Action Alliance recommends that parents applying for health care for U.S.-born children use the AHCCCS paper application which states in Question 6 that parents do not need to answer questions about their own status when applying for benefits for their U.S. born children.

Rep. Nancy Barto (R-District 7), Chairman of the House Health and Human Services Committee and a member of the Education and Judiciary Committee has reportedly stated that she was not concerned about children of illegal immigrants getting the services they need because it shows that the law has been effective.

BILLS

The Senate as added the following pre-filed bills:

SB1016 special court commissioner; appointment

SB1017 elected county officers; authority

SB1018 photo enforcement procedures; justice courts

SB1019 evidence based programs; requirements; reports

SB1020 government service contracts; Arizona preference

SB1021 justification; defensive display; firearm

The House apparently has slackened it pre-files, and only HB2037 secretary of state; business services .

LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Here is the new Senate leadership, complete with pictures. For regular members go to the Senate and House website<alis.gov>. The photos are eminently suited for use on your family dartboard.

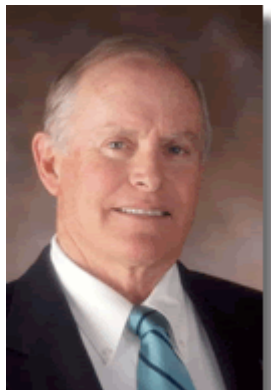
Senate Leadership



Robert "Bob" Burns
Republican
District 9
Senate President



Chuck Gray
Republican
District 19
Senate Majority Leader



Steve Pierce
Republican
District 1
Senate Majority Whip



Barbara Leff
Republican
District 11
Senate President Pro Tempore

Jorge Luis Garcia
Democrat
District 27
Senate Minority Leader



Linda Lopez
Democrat
District 29
Senate
Senate Minority Assistant Leader



Rebecca Rios

Democrat
District 23
Minority Whip

House Leadership



Kirk Adams
Republican
District 19

Speaker of the House



John McComish
Republican
District 20

Majority Leader



Andrew M. Tobin
Republican
District 1

Majority Whip



Steven B. Yarbrough
Republican
District 21

Speaker Pro Tempore



David Lujan
Democrat
District 15

Minority Leader



Chad Campbell
Democrat
District 14

Minority Whip



Kyrsten Sinema
Democrat
District 15

**Assistant Minority
Leader**