



## **SVdP VOP Weekly Legislative Briefing by Tom Finnerty Jan. 18, 2010**

### **Reality Sets In**

Governor Brewer's budget released last Friday makes the following deep cuts:

- Return to '06 funding levels for K-12 education triggering reductions in federal support
- Elimination of all-day Kindergarten
- Maintains university funding at '06 level (75% of '08) level
- Elimination of KidsCare health coverage for 47,000 children
- Reduction of AHCCCS rolls by 25% eliminating coverage for 310,000 individuals
- Reduced service for 17,000 seriously mentally ill adults (about half of that population)
- Elimination of cash assistance for 10,000 families
- Places a hard cap on day care assistance; eliminating service for more than 10,000 children in working poor families
- Closes Dept of Juvenile Corrections transferring minors to county detention centers.
- Reduces State employee pay by 5%.

***Cutbacks in health care for low income Arizonans will result in a loss of nearly \$70 million in matching federal funds to the state. This budget assumes an immediate approval by the legislature of the one-cent increase in state sales tax sought unsuccessfully by the governor for the past year. Without this additional revenue (estimated to bring in \$1 billion in 2011), more devastating cuts will be required.***

***All members of the state legislature are up for re-election in the fall: NOW is the time to let them know that a vote for a temporary increase in sales tax is understood as essential by their constituents. Go to [www.azleg.gov](http://www.azleg.gov) and click on "Who are my Legislators?" Call, e-mail or FAX. Time is of the essence.***

## **Meanwhile Projects, aide funded despite deficit**

Mary Jo Pitzl of the AZ Republic reports that while the state is out of money triggering 4,000-plus layoffs, the sale of state buildings and cuts in services to children and the elderly, expenditures at the capitol have included:

- An expenditure of \$60,000 to create a new caucus room and relocate several staff offices at the State Senate.
- The hiring of a communications director for Secretary of State Ken Bennett (a \$70,000 per year post that did not exist when Jan Brewer held the office).
- An expenditure of \$65,000 by the House of Representatives for an economic study of key recommendations including policies already voted on.

"I thought there was a hiring freeze," said Sen. Linda Lopez, D-Tucson. "These are nice things to have, but we need to look at critical needs."

Tim Schmaltz, Executive Director of PAFCO (Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition), pondered other uses for these funds as cuts critical to vulnerable Arizonans are made – for example, 766 additional nights of safe shelter for women and children who are victims of domestic violence or backfill of money lost for child care support or aid to the disabled.

## **Politics: Four Republican Candidates for Governor Declared:**

Owen Buz Mills, a member of the National Rifle Association Board of Directors, filed a campaign finance report with the Secretary of State's Office last week detailing the funding, even though it is not due until the end of the month.

Doug Cole, a campaign manager for incumbent Gov. Jan Brewer, said Mills' financing won't affect her bid for a full term of her own. Brewer intends to run with public money and already has gathered the necessary \$5 donations to qualify her for \$707,447 for her primary race and, if she wins, another \$1,061,171 for the general election.

Paradise Valley Mayor Vernon Parker and state Treasurer Dean Martin are also announced candidates.