



## Governor Ducey Provides Relief

### Public Health Fund receives in-state support

Governor Ducey announced that the state will be contributing an additional \$50 million to the public health fund in order to combat the spread of COVID-19. A large part of the new investment will focus on resources for the vulnerable, such as face masks, especially the elderly. Starting July 17th, the state will be providing three free non-medical cloth face masks for those 65 or older or who are medically vulnerable. According to the Arizona Department of Health Services (AZDHS), orders are limited to one per household. Masks will be delivered within 2-4 weeks.

The Governor also provided clarity on testing amid a spike in new cases statewide. Recently, the state announced the creation of Project Catapult to ramp up testing, and officials hope to be conducting or have the capacity to conduct a million tests a month by the end of July. During the past three weeks, cases increased by 108% and tests increased by 59%. Of known test results from last week, 17% have come back positive.

Due to increased demand, the state is adding to its frontline workforce as well. According to AZDHS Director Christ, the state is partnering with Texas based Vizient Incorporated for six weeks and all costs will be assumed by the Department. A total of 584 nurses will be provided to 21 hospitals around the state with 250 inpatient or medical surgical nurses and 334 critical care nurses. The program is expected to start within the next seven days.

For more information about free masks, click [here](#).

### Governor extends eviction moratorium

Governor Ducey signed an executive order extending a moratorium on residential evictions until October 31st. The order ensures renters impacted by COVID-19 will be able to stay in their homes while extending the time to access rental assistance programs, but does not halt the liability to pay rent. Additionally, the Governor allocated \$5 million to launch the Foreclosure Prevention Program. The program provides financial assistance to individuals who rely on income from tenants to help them avoid foreclosure. Another \$650,000 will be allocated to Community Action Agencies for additional staff to process rental assistance for those in need.

Since the pandemic began, the state and local governments have worked to resolve rental housing payment issues. Recently, Maricopa County announced it has begun accepting applications for rental assistance totaling \$30 million.

Households will be eligible for \$1,500 per month for a total of three months. Payments will be made directly to landlords.

Twelve different agencies around the county are accepting and processing applications. While eligibility is income-based, the requirements are less than its typical assistance programs to get the funds out more quickly to a greater number of people. They estimate the funds will help 6,000 residents.

To view the new executive order, click [here](#).

To view guidance for landlords and renters, click [here](#).

### **Groups challenge ballot measures**

Arizonans for Great Schools and a Strong Economy, a group financed by the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, filed a lawsuit against proposed ballot initiative Invest in Ed which seeks to raise \$940 million annually for K-12 education. The lawsuit argues that Invest in Ed did not follow state law in collecting petition signatures and alleges that the measure misleads taxpayers by not stating the full tax impact. According to the suit, the 100-word initiative statement is misleading because it refers to the tax on individuals making more than \$250,000 as a 3.5% surcharge instead of a tax increase. The complaint also alleges that the measure defines "teacher" too broadly and misrepresents who would benefit from the salary increases. The measure defines a teacher as "any non-administrative school personnel, including certified teachers, who instruct students or support student academic achievement."

The Arizona Hospital and Healthcare Association filed a lawsuit against Stop Surprise Billing and Protect Patients Act, an initiative that would require hospitals to increase the wages of practically all non-managerial hospital employees by five percent upon implementation. The suit argues that the initiative process was flawed because it never identified California based, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) as its sponsor and source of its funds. Additionally, the group argues that the 100-word statement is misleading because the text referring to "direct care hospital workers" is overly broad. The initiative indicates that "direct care hospital workers" applies to nurses, aides, technicians, janitorial and housekeeping staff, food service workers and non-managerial administrative staff but not doctors. The lawsuit claims this is an issue because a reasonable voter would interpret the definition to mean that wage rates will be adjusted for those directly involved in the care of patients such as a physician or a nurse.

Both suits now head to Maricopa County Superior Court but the final decision is likely to come from the Supreme Court.

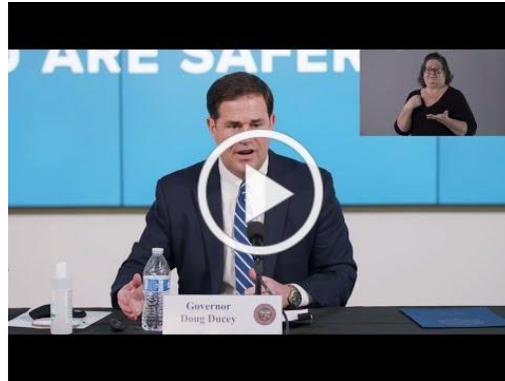
### **Unemployment claims set record**

According to Arizona Department of Economic Security (AZDES) officials, first-time unemployment claims reached 263,000, a record for Arizona during the pandemic. For the week ending July 11th, the number of first-time claims jumped by 50,000. The largest increase was attributed to first-time filers who are unemployed, but those who are eligible for regular unemployment also increased. The number of first-time claims has more than doubled since the start of June as has the number of continuing claims.

The agency is also combatting a rise in unemployment fraud. AZDES officials announced that they have taken back \$70 million from 28,000 unemployment assistance accounts that were closed earlier last week because of suspected fraud. AZDES is continuing to work with those who believe they are eligible for benefits. Verifying eligibility and reinstating benefits will require additional information/documentation. Upon verification, a new debit card will be issued to the individual.



## Governor Ducey Provides COVID-19 Update



## Arizona Update on Issues



[Click here to find COVID-19 resources and volunteer opportunities](#)

[Click here to find out how to donate a mobile hotspot](#)

## Upcoming Legislators' Birthdays



Happy Birthday  
Sen. Lupe Contreras (D)  
Monday, July 27th

Representing LD19, Senator Contreras was first elected to the Legislature in 2013. An Arizona native, he was chosen by his peers to serve as Senate Assistant Minority Leader. A graduate of Glendale Community College, he is the Director of new business for Pomeroy & Associates, a law firm which he joined in 1999. At the Legislature, Contreras is a member of the Senate Finance, Judiciary, Transportation and Joint Legislative Audit committees. This session his top legislative priority was SB1567 which would have established that justification is a defense in any prosecution of a criminal offense, instead of for any offense under Title 13 (Criminal



Happy Birthday Rep.  
T.J. Shope (R)  
Wednesday, August 12th

Representing LD8, Representative Shope was first elected to the Legislature in 2012. An Arizona native, he was appointed to be Speaker Pro Tempore of the House in 2016 and reappointed in 2018. A graduate of Arizona State University where he earned a B.S. in political science, Shope is the owner of an independent grocery store in Coolidge. At the Legislature, he serves as Chairman of House Ethics and is Vice Chairman of the Rules Committee. Additionally, he is a member of the House Education and Natural Resources Committees. This session his top legislative priority was HB2243 which would have appropriated \$28 million from the

Code). To wish Senator Contreras happy birthday: [lcontreras@azleg.gov](mailto:lcontreras@azleg.gov).

general fund to the Department of Transportation to replace and expand the Gila River bridge on Interstate 10. To wish Representative Shope happy birthday: [tshope@azleg.gov](mailto:tshope@azleg.gov).

## Arizona Governmental Affairs

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