



A Budget Has Been Reached

House Passes COVID-19 Response Package

House Republicans agreed Monday to appropriate \$50 million in one-time funding from the general fund to enhance Arizona's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, President Fann and Senate Minority Leader Bradley reached agreement to address the economic impact of the virus however, the deal was struck down by House leadership late Thursday night. The package includes money to prevent evictions and foreclosures during the crisis, provide services for the homeless, assist small businesses and pay for food bank operations. It also includes longer welfare payments and a waiver from work requirements. This agreement is in addition to the \$55 million emergency measure passed by the Legislature to combat the ongoing public health crisis. The \$11.8 billion "skinny" budget will fund state agencies at current levels as the Capitol begins a prolonged recess with the intent that they will come back at a later date to approve a more robust budget. I will soon provide an in-depth analysis of what is included.

Legislature Will Recess

The Legislature will recess until April 13th. Speculation was stirring around the Capitol last week on whether the Legislature would begin a prolonged recess or adjourn sine die. Both Speaker Bowers and President Fann met with leaders to discuss viable options moving forward and the fate of more than 600 remaining bills that are still awaiting to be heard. Legislative leaders agreed to devise a timeline before the June 30th FY2021 deadline to include priorities not included in the "skinny" budget and assess the COVID-19 pandemic throughout these next few weeks. Among the priorities not included in the baseline budget is fully restoring district additional assistance which, Senate and House Leadership adamantly support.

Lawmakers Agree Upon School Closures Plan

It has been two weeks since Governor Ducey and Superintendent Hoffman mutually agreed to close down all Arizona schools to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there has been increasing uncertainty pertaining to a comprehensive contingency plan should the crisis worsen across Arizona. Both Representative Michelle Udall and Senator Sylvia Allen announced a school closures plan earlier last week through multiple stakeholder meetings with the Department of Education, Arizona School Board Association and others. Representative Udall emphasized on the House floor that this is about enhancing a school districts flexibility for employees, students and parents. The bill would require schools to offer educational materials in an alternative format until the end

of the year, suspend Move On When Reading and cancel AZMerit testing, among other provisions. Additionally, the bill would allow schools to generate route miles for transportation funding, pay employees if they agree to work from home or accept reassignment to other jobs, and use funds from the current school year to provide summer school courses in 2020.

Update: Governor Ducey announced last Friday that all Arizona schools will continue to be closed until April 10th. School districts are providing daily meals for any child under the age of 18 during this period. Visit <https://www.azed.gov/> for more information.

SBA Approves Loans for Arizona Businesses

Governor Ducey and leaders have been working diligently to ensure that necessary safety nets are in place for small businesses throughout Arizona during this public health crisis. Last Thursday, the United States Small Business Administration approved an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration that will ensure immediate assistance for small businesses in the state. Through the program, individual businesses can be eligible for up to \$2 million. The loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of COVID-19's impact. The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses without credit available elsewhere and for non-profits it is 2.75 percent. All small businesses are eligible to apply if they meet standard criteria which you can find [here](#).

Arizona Activates National Guard

Arizona became the 27th state to activate the National Guard in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, Governor Ducey announced that the National Guard will assist grocery stores and food banks in the face of heightened demand. Other additional preventative measures were announced including the halting of all elective surgeries in the state, in order to free up medical resources and maintain the capacity for hospital and providers to continue offering vital services. Also declared in the executive order -- all restaurants in Arizona counties with confirmed coronavirus cases can only provide take-out dining options, and all bars in those counties will close. Currently, there are confirmed or presumptive positive cases of COVID-19 in Apache, Coconino, Graham, Maricopa, Navajo, Pima, Pinal and Yuma Counties.



Governor Ducey Gives COVID-19 Update



Arizona Update on Issues



[Click for the latest ADHS Update on COVID-19](#)



[Click Here to Find Blood Drive Locations](#)

Legislators' Birthdays This Week



Happy Birthday Rep.
Michelle Udall (R) Monday,
March 23d

Representing LD25. She serves as Chair of the House Education Committee and is a member of the House Appropriations and Natural Resources Committees. A Mesa native, her innovative style and pragmatic approach to public policy is highly regarded by her colleagues. When she is not at the legislature, she works as a Math Teacher at Mountain View High School in Mesa and is a small business owner. A fact that many do not know about her is that she was a gymnastics athlete throughout her childhood and worked as a coach for almost 10 years. To wish Representative Udall happy birthday: Mudall@azleg.gov



Happy Birthday Rep.
Lorenzo Sierra (D)
Monday, March 30th

Representing LD19, Representative Sierra is serving his first term at the Capitol. A Tucson native, he was a member of the Avondale City Council before being elected to the State House. He is a member of the House Ways and Means and Government Committees. Sierra holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism from Arizona State University and is a consultant at Segal Consulting, a Human Resources and employee benefits consulting firm. To wish Representative Sierra a Happy Birthday: Lsierra@azleg.gov

Arizona Governmental Affairs

Address:
99 E. Virginia Avenue, #180

[E-mail AZ Governmental](#)

Phoenix, AZ 85004
602.296.5966