

Legislative Link Update

March 20, 2020

Hello and welcome to the 2020 Glendale Legislative Link Program.

Today is the 68th day of sessions and the entire focus at the Capitol is on the budget.

Lawmakers are increasingly talking about temporarily suspending the Legislature to combat the spread of COVID-19. Leadership from the Arizona House and Senate met on Monday morning and announced that they would introduce a “skinny” budget and a list of 28 “noncontroversial” bills – mostly agency continuations and tax conformity. A “skinny” budget is simply a baseline budget which funds ongoing programs and essential needs of every state agency similar to the continuing resolutions often used by Congress. This budget would not allocate funding for new or discretionary programs and services from the nearly \$400 million budget surplus. Earlier this week, a few members committed not to engage at the Capitol until the spread of Corona Virus has ceased. Shortly after the announcement from those members, the House passed a motion to provide the Speaker with the authority to allow select members to vote via technology. The Speaker now has the authority to make the determination of how long this will be allowed and who qualifies for it. It was controversial and ultimately passed on a partisan vote. With all of these challenges, the House and Senate have remained focused all week on their most important and critical statutory responsibility; passing a state budget. Once a budget has been passed, it will be up to House and Senate leadership to determine whether the two chambers recess for a considerable time or close the legislative session (adjourn Sine Die). If they decide to Sine Die it would mean all bills that have not already passed will be dead for the year. In this case a special session may be called during the interim to address pressing issues such as additional COVID-19 response measures. If they choose to suspend operations, bill progress would be frozen in place until they came back into session.

All week, House and Senate leadership have worked to introduce a “skinny” budget. The House began their day yesterday at 10 a.m. and immediately began debating the budget. The Senate met shortly after. The Senate passed each of the ten annual budget bills plus two additional bills that are aimed at addressing the spread of COVID-19. The House passed two budget bills and a bill aimed to address the spread of COVID-19 and then recessed just before 8 p.m. The House will resume on Monday.

Here are summaries of the two bills aimed at addressing the spread of COVID-19:

Mirroring bills are identical pieces of legislation passed simultaneously in each chamber.

HB 1693/HB 2910 Public School Closures; Coronavirus Disease

The most notable action taken yesterday was the passage of HB 2910/SB 2910 Public School Closures; Coronavirus Disease. The two mirroring bills set forth requirements for paying teachers and staff while schools are closed, authorizes alternative learning platforms as a substitute for the classroom, eliminates the requirements to extend the school year or require make up days/hours, and authorizes public schools to use their transportation fleet to perform school operations that are deemed to support students and their families during the statewide closure, as determined by the public school. The bill included an emergency clause and passed unanimously out of the House and Senate. Attached is a fact sheet if you wish to learn more about the bill.

HB 2911/SB 1694 Unemployment Compensation; Coronavirus Disease

HB 2911/SB 1694 are also mirroring bills introduced to provide additional resources and flexibility for the Unemployment Insurance Program for individuals and businesses affected by COVID-19 in Arizona. The bill authorizes the Department of Economic Security to implement alternative benefit eligibility and employer contribution requirements for the federal-state Unemployment Insurance Program. The bill included an emergency clause making the legislation retroactive from and after March 10, 2020. SB 1694 passed out of the Senate 30-0, but HB 2911 still needs to be voted on in the House before it can be sent to the Governor. We will share more information to the Council and our residents through the Neighborhood Legislative Link Program once DES provides additional details and criteria for receiving state aid.

Similar to previous years, our bill tracking list will be available through an online report that can be accessed at the following website. The password is "Glendale". Utilizing a dynamic online report allows our Legislative Link participants to receive the most up to date information on bill status and committee hearing schedules at any time. <https://azcapitolreports.com/webreport.cfm?webreport=26403&listid=68786&print=true>

Thank you again for your participation in Glendale’s Legislative Link Program.

Remember, you can watch committee hearings via the internet by going to the [legislature’s website](#) and clicking on the live proceedings hyperlink located in the column on the left side of the page.

Arizona State Legislature Website: www.azleg.gov

To determine who your state legislators are, [click here](#)

You can also visit the Intergovernmental Programs Department’s webpage for additional information by [clicking here](#)

The information being emailed to you is a result of your subscription to the City of Glendale Legislative Link Program. We hope to grow this email distribution list to ensure that our neighbors and friends can be aware of the important issues being discussed at the legislature. To add an additional user or to unsubscribe, please email dtorres@glendaleaz.com

Best regards,

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