



Public Health Emergency Is Declared

Legislature Enacts \$55 million To Combat COVID-19

Governor Ducey and Arizona's Department of Health Services Director Cara Christ have been collaborating with national officials as the world combats the COVID-19 pandemic. On Wednesday, the Governor signed a Public Health Emergency Declaration in response to the growing concern nationally of the contagion spreading. The executive order requires nursing homes and assisted living facilities to implement stricter visitor policies and enhanced symptom checks for all health care workers and visitors. The order also requires insurance companies and health plans to fully cover out-of-network providers for COVID-19 testing, including laboratories and telemedicine. Governor Ducey called the emergency declaration a proactive measure to give health care officials and providers the resources they need to confront the spread of the virus. The announcement came after the CDC announced Arizona would receive \$12.4 million to support the public health response, in addition to the initial \$500,000 the state received from the CDC. On Thursday, in addition to the Governor's Emergency Declaration and \$5 million supplemental appropriation request; the Arizona House and Senate passed legislation to enable DHS access to another \$50 million in emergency funding from the state's "rainy-day" fund to support the state's Public Health Emergencies Fund. If not all of the \$50 million is needed, the remaining funds will revert to the rainy-day fund at the end of the fiscal year.

Legislature Remains in Session

Despite concerns, the Legislature will remain in session however, the public will be limited to attending only committee meetings starting Friday, March 13th. In an email sent Thursday, Senate President Fann and Speaker Bowers issued a press release detailing policies to be implemented by the Legislature to prevent and contain the spread of the virus. Among those described, both the House and Senate Galleries will be closed to the public until further notice. Additionally, both leaders called on the public to limit attendance at committee hearings and advised members and staff to avoid all in-person meetings. Scheduled meetings will can be held via conference call, Skype or similar services. Both President Fann and Speaker Bowers assured the public that they are committed to taking every necessary measure to respond to the challenge. Hearings scheduled this week have been postponed until further notice.

Yesterday, Speaker Bowers announced that rules would be suspended and that budget bills would be introduced. Legislative leaders are hashing out a plan to push through a "bare bones" budget to ensure that the state is funded should lawmakers not make it back before the new fiscal year. Both Speaker Bowers and President Fann stated that a comprehensive plan would be released later this week. Will keep you posted!

Senator Carter and Boyer Leave Capitol

According to several sources, both Senator Carter and Boyer are not returning to the Senate until the concerns relating to the spread of the virus have abated. The departure of the two senators, if true, would cause the Senate to lose its Republican majority and would cause any piece of legislation brought to the Senate floor for a vote of all Senate members without bipartisan support, to fail. Senator Carter canceled her Senate Higher Education and Workforce Community Committee next week and allegedly told colleagues that she will not be returning for two weeks as a preventative measure. Senator Carter is the primary caretaker for her elderly mother said she will work remotely from home.

Smart and Safe Arizona Qualifies for General Election

The effort to legalize recreational marijuana in Arizona crossed the minimum threshold to appear on the 2020 ballot in November. The referendum obtained 237,000 signatures earlier than predicted. According to the Smart and Safe campaign officials, if passed, proponents expect this measure will generate \$300 million in new revenue. The initiative directs the revenue to community colleges, public safety, public health programs and infrastructure. Additionally, would direct an expected \$20 million annually for addiction prevention, substance abuse treatment, teen suicide prevention, mental health programs and other justice projects to Arizona's Department of Health Services. A similar initiative was proposed during the 2016 general election and lost narrowly, by 67,000 votes.

To date, no opposition campaign has been formalized though numerous organizations, such as D.A.R.E. and others have released information warning of the substantial negative consequences that have arisen in other states in which recreational marijuana has been legalized.

https://dare.org/leading-marijuana-policy-group-releases-study-on-impact-of-legalization/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIkNWw_p-Y6AIVEhitBh3jMQWCEAAYAiAAEgKUbFD_BwE



Governor Ducey Declares Emergency



Arizona Update on Issues



**Governor Doug Ducey
And Superintendent
Kathy Hoffman Announce
Closure Of Arizona
Schools**



**Banner Health Gives
COVID-19 Update**

Legislators' Birthdays This Week



**Happy Birthday Rep.
Athena Salman (D) Monday
March 16th**

Representing LD26. She serves as the House Minority Whip. She lives in Tempe and is a member of the House Elections and Rules committees. Her two biggest legislative priorities are supporting public education and women's rights. She is married to Senator Juan Mendez (LD26). To wish Representative Salman happy birthday: ASalman@azleg.gov



**Happy Birthday
Senator Sonny Borrelli
Thursday March 19th**

Representing LD5, Senate Majority Whip Borrelli is one of the more colorful characters at the Capitol. Retiring from the US Marine Corps in 1999, Sonny was first elected to the Lake Havasu City Council before being elected to the State House in 2013. Among his interests are boating, fishing and motorcycling. To wish Senator Borrelli a Happy Birthday: SBorrelli@azleg.gov

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