

WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Arizona Transit Association

January 27, 2006

Governor Napolitano Vetoes English Learner Bills Twice

Arizona became liable Wednesday for fines of \$500,000 a day after Governor Janet Napolitano rejected the latest legislative plan to pay for improved instruction for thousands of Arizona schoolchildren struggling to learn English. For the second time this week, the Governor vetoed a Republican-backed plan to help English-learners in public schools. This time, the court-ordered deadline passed without another legislative attempt to revise the proposal.

Governor Napolitano said she rejected the plan because it contained corporate tuition-tax credits for private-school scholarships, which could divert millions of dollars from public schools into private schools. The governor and legislators also remained far apart on how much Arizona should spend on instruction for the more than 150,000 children in Arizona whose English skills are deficient.

The Governor favors a plan that would more than triple the \$360 extra now spent on each English-language learner. It would eventually cost \$180 million a year. The vetoed Republican plan would increase spending by \$31 million for one year but would then become a grant program with no known price tag because schools would first have to devote existing federal funds to the programs before they could ask for state assistance.

U.S. District Judge Ranier Collins ordered fines of \$500,000 a day in December if lawmakers failed to act by Wednesday. Those fines could grow to \$2 million a day if this year's legislative session ends with no further progress.

Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard filed a court brief Wednesday asking the Court to direct the fines to the state Department of Education so the money could eventually be used to help English-learners.

Once again, given the legislative and gubernatorial reactions, conventional wisdom continues to suggest that it is increasingly unlikely that a short legislative session will be achieved.

Week in Review

SB 1166, relating to stopping on state highways, was held at AzTA's request in the Senate Committee on Transportation. An amendment is being prepared to address an issue related to a definition.

HB 2332, relating to repayment of HURF revenue, passed out of the House Committee on Transportation with a 6-0 vote.

A Preview for the Week Ahead

SB 1166, relating to stopping on state highways, is scheduled to be heard in the Senate Committee on Transportation on Tuesday, January 31st at 1:30 p.m.

Comments

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LEGISLATIVE TRACKING REPORT

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BILL	TITLE	SPONSORS	SUMMARY	HOUSE COMMITTEES	SENATE COMMITTEES	ACTION
HB 2332	appropriations; highway monies; repayment	McClure and (2)	As introduced, appropriates \$52,215,300 in FY 2006-2007 from the state general fund to the Highway Users Revenue Fund for payment of monies diverted in FY 2004-2005.	Transportation, Appropriations (P), Rules		passed, House Transportation, 1/26
SB 1166	stopping vehicles on highways	Verschoor and (3)	As introduced, permits public transportation service vehicles to stop on specified state highway routes for the purposes of embarking and disembarking passengers. These highways must conform to specified conditions, including: a speed limit that does not exceed forty-five miles per hour, designated and marked stopping locations and signalized intersection controls.		Transportation, Rules	held, Senate Transportation, 1/24
SB 1278	lottery proceeds; university scholarships	Hale and (10)	As introduced, establishes the Lottery Tuition Fund to pay for a percentage of tuition costs for in-state students who maintain at least 2.5 grade point average and served in the military.		Higher Education, Appropriations, Rules	committee assignment, 1/25
SB 1298	appropriation; highway fund repayment	Flake and (22)	As introduced, appropriates \$63,200,000 from the state General Fund in fiscal year 2006-2007 to the State Highway Fund for repayment of monies diverted last year for Department of Public Safety salaries.		Transportation, Appropriations, Rules	committee assignment, 1/25

