



AzTA *ADVOCACY*

2018 AzTA Legislative Wrap Up Report

May 4, 2018

The 53rd Arizona Legislature, Second Regular Session, concluded its business by adjourning *sine die* at 12:26 a.m. on Friday, May 4. The session lasted 116 days, a little longer than recent sessions, and produced 1,206 bills, 285 of which have so far been signed into law by Governor Doug Ducey (as of 5/4). Currently, the Governor has vetoed 16 bills. By law, the Governor now has 10 days to take action on all passed legislation.

The general effective date for 2018 legislation is August 3, 2018.

General Summary

A session that initially looked to be proceeding with little in the way of fireworks eventually became one of the more memorable legislative gatherings in recent memory, featuring among many things, the expulsion of House Appropriations Chair Don Shooter over allegations of sexual harassment. But eclipsing all else was a mass, five-day public teacher strike that brought 50,000 educators, staff and their families to the State Capitol on Thursday, April 26, followed by four additional days with many thousands of red-clad, "RedForEd" protestors demanding huge increases in funding for teacher pay, staff support and the reinstatement of basic school funding levels to pre-recession amounts.

It was reportedly the largest teacher walkout in the United States, and resulted ultimately in a state budget that gave teachers a 20 percent pay raise by FY 2020 and restored pre-recession funding. It was an impressive display of grass roots strength, and had a legislative impact unlike nothing else in at least several decades.

Republicans controlled both houses. The Senate membership was 17 Republicans, 13 Democrats. The House split was 35 Republicans, 25 Democrats. In both houses, the more conservative members of the GOP far outnumbered the moderates, though with the narrow split in the Senate, the few moderate Republican senators had a good deal of influence over what bills ultimately passed.

As always, the session was filled with hundreds of bills addressing a wide variety of topics, with education issues such as a potential repeal of the 2017 school voucher law and the

opioid epidemic, resulting in largely bipartisan legislation to help battle the crisis from a number of different angles.

One general area of interest, state water policy and regulation, was expected to be a major part of the Legislature's agenda in 2018, but that intense battle failed to materialize. A potential showdown between Governor Ducey's administration and established water interests didn't happen, and though there were a number of water policy-related bills during the session, the Governor did not have adequate support for his more ambitious ideas.

The state's budget was, as usual, the subject of intense negotiation and debate, though, as stated above, was dominated by the last-minute demand of the Governor for a 20 percent teacher pay raise. The total General Fund budget approved by the Legislature and signed into law was \$10.4 billion.

Bills of Interest to AzTA

A number of bills were introduced that were of direct or indirect interest to AzTA. A few bills made it through the process and were signed into law, while others failed to pass. A few highlights are discussed below.

HB 2166 (vehicle fees; alternative fuel VLT) allows the Director of ADOT to establish a per-vehicle fee to cover the cost of funding the Highway Patrol division of DPS, and also partially and gradually repeal the VLT exemption for alternative fuel vehicles. The bill is designed to effectively eliminate the HURF "sweeps" that have been ongoing for a number of years. The Governor signed HB 2166 on April 25 (Chapter 265, Laws 2018), and the bill is expected to have a revenue stream of approximately \$150 million because of the per-vehicle fee. This revenue stream will now partly be used to fund the teacher pay raises discussed above, with the balance going to the Highway Patrol.

HB 2162 (county excise tax for transportation) stated that the board of supervisors of any county would be permitted to submit to the voters a transportation plan funded by an excise tax. As an example, Maricopa County would have been able to put before voters an extension of its existing ½ cent excise tax for transportation (often referred to as "Prop 500"). After extensive, months-long negotiations with various stakeholders and legislators, the bill ultimately did not survive in the process. The bill had strong support among Democrats and moderate Republicans, but faced heavy opposition from GOP conservatives.

HB 2514 (HURF distribution; cities; towns; counties) stated that the Department of Transportation would allocate \$18 million from revenues of the HURF fund in the next fiscal year to small counties and municipalities. Of the \$18 million one-time transfer, \$9 million would be distributed to counties with a population of less than 250,000 persons and \$9 million would be distributed to municipalities with a population of less than 7,500 persons. The bill passed the House, and moved through two Senate committees, but ultimately did not proceed further in the Senate.

HB 2243 (wrong-way driving; violation; DUI) establishes criminal penalties for driving the

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by the Senate Transportation Committee and the Judiciary Committee before final approval in the Senate. It was signed into law by Governor Ducey on March 28 (Chapter 81, Laws 2018.)

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

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