

Voice of the Poor
Legislative Report Card
September, 2007

For the first time in years, the legislative leadership in the Senate worked on a bipartisan basis and produced a budget that the governor was happy to sign. Weeks of wrangling between House and Senate leadership over the size of a tax cut preceded this agreement. Ultimately, the budget contained \$10 million in tax cuts along with funding for a number of bills supported by Voice of the Poor.

The voting record for HB 2789 (health and welfare; budget reconciliation) is provided at the bottom for your information. If your legislators supported this portion of the State budget, be sure and thank them! Thank you for your help!

Included in the State budget and supported by Voice of the Poor:

- **Restored funding for KidsCare (low income healthcare) outreach to enroll eligible children who are not currently insured.** *Sponsor: State Senator Carolyn Allen. KidsCare is Arizona's version of the federal block grant program, SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program). The Legislature allocated \$10 million from the General Fund to match \$48 million in federal SCHIP funding.*
- **Continued eligibility of parents for KidsCare healthcare with monthly-tiered premiums based on household income.**
- **Raised the income level for AHCCCS eligibility for pregnant women to 150% from 133% of the FPL (federal poverty level).** *General Fund allocation of \$1.8 million to match \$3.5 in federal funds. Bill sponsors: Senators Leff, Burton Cahill, O'Halleran, Konopnicki, McCune Davis.*
- **Provided for the use of up to \$1 million in unclaimed lottery proceeds for homeless services and shelter.** *Original bill sponsors: Groe, Ableser, Barnes, Burges, Kirkpatrick, Mason, Sinema, Miranda, Farley, Ulmer, Aboud, Blendu, Flake, Garcia, Gray C., Johnson and Soltero. Representative Robert Meza worked hard to keep this funding in the final budget.*
- **A 5% increase (\$9 million) in childcare subsidy funding for affordable care for low income working parents.** *Original bill sponsors: Representatives Lopez, Garcia, M., Hershberger and Senator Allen.*

These bills supported by Voice of the Poor are now Arizona law:

- **HB 2247 (TANF; diversion program; sanctions) allows applicants to receive cash assistance as temporary short-term aid while using employment services.** *Bill sponsors: Representative Hershberger, Alvarez, Anderson et.al.)*
- HB 2681 (utility assistance; qualified fuel fund) requires unclaimed utility deposits to be transferred to a private community-based nonprofit entity whose purpose is to provide utility assistance to low income Arizonans.** *Bill sponsors: Representatives Groe, Ableser, Barnes, Burges, Kirkpatrick, Mason, Sinema, Miranda, and Farley.*

These bills supported by Voice of the Poor were NOT passed:

- **HB 2380 (charitable organizations; tax credit)**
Bill sponsors: Anderson, Barnes, Biggs et. al. This bill would simplify the Arizona charitable tax credit for the working poor by eliminating the baseline year requirement. (VOP is working with legislators to introduce this bill again next session.)
- **SB 1448 (strike everything: deferred presentment transactions; verification)**
This bill was the last of several bills introduced calling for additional consumer protection for predatory loans (payday loans, title loans, etc.) The bill died due to lack of agreement between House and Senate versions. Representatives Chad Campbell, Steve Gallardo, Marian McClure and Senator Debbie McCune Davis will continue to work toward effective legislation

HOW THEY VOTED! HB 2789 (Health and welfare; budget reconciliation)

HOUSE: Ayes 41, Nays 18 (in bold), Not voting 1

Ableser Y	Brown Y	Farley Y	Lopez Y	Nelson Y	Schapira Y
Adams N	Burges N	Farnsworth N	Lujan Y	Nichols N	Sinema Y
Alvarez Y	Burns, J. Y	Gallardo Y	Mason Y	Pancrazi Y	Stump Y
Anderson Y	Campbell, Ch Y	Garcia, M. Y	McClure Y	Paton Y	Thrasher Y
Barnes N	Campbell, CI NV	Groe N	McComish Y	Pearce N	Tobin Y
Barto N	Clark N	Hershberger Y	McGuire Y	Prezelski Y	Tom Y
Bedford Y	Crandall N	Kavanaugh N	McLain N	Reagan Y	Ulmer Y
Biggs N	Crump N	Kirkpatrick Y	Meza Y	Rios, P. Y	Weiers, Jerry N
Boone Y	DeSimone Y	Konopnicki Y	Miranda, B. Y	Robson Y	Yarbrough N
Bradley Y	Driggs N	Lopes Y	Murphy, N	Saradnik Y	Weiers, Jim Y

SENATE: Ayes 22, Nays 6 (in bold), Not voting 2

Aboud Y	Burns, B. Y	Gorman N	Harper NV	McCune Davis Y	Soltero Y
Aguirre Y	Cahill NV	Gould N	Huppenthal Y	Miranda, R. Y	Tibshraeny N
Allen Y	Cheuvront Y	Gray, C. N	Johnson N	O'Halleran Y	Verschoor Y
Arzberger Y	Flake N	Gray, L. Y	Taylor Y	Pesquiera Y	Waring Y
Blendu Y	Garcia, J. Y	Hale Y	Leff Y	Rios, R. Y	Bee Y

Voice of the Poor will next meet on Wednesday, September 19 at 3:30 p.m. in Vincentian Support Services. The agenda will include discussion of the VOP Legislative Agenda for 2008 to be submitted to the Phoenix Diocesan Board in November. A questionnaire for Conferences from Voice of the Poor will also be on the agenda. For information or to submit an agenda item, please call Lucy Howell at (602) 695-1604 or e-mail her at Howishome@aol.com

VOP meetings are open to all who are interested.

www.voiceofthepoor.org
National VOP website

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