

# Voice of the Poor

August, 2008

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## Final Report on the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Arizona State Legislature *A Year of Defense by Voice of the Poor*

The Legislature adjourned Sine Die on June 27, 2008. The Session lasted for 166 days although the Legislature's rules require adjournment after 100 days. The majority of the Session was devoted to the budget issue. The members had to close a \$1 billion deficit before the end of the 2008 fiscal year on June 30, and a projected \$2 billion deficit for the 2009 fiscal year that began on July 1.

There was little chance for the VOP to work on improving programs to assist the poor. Our main objective was to insure that existing programs in Arizona's fragile safety net did not receive major cuts. In that we were successful. These VOP-supported programs survived the knife: Kidscare eligibility remains at 200% of the federal poverty level, medical services for pregnant women at 150% of the poverty level, general assistance remains (providing a modest monthly stipend for disabled waiting for federal disability) as well as the bulk of the Housing Trust Fund (source of funding for affordable housing, homelessness and eviction prevention funding for SVdP's Family Assistance Ministry at Watkins).

The budget including these programs passed both houses with a bare majority (16 votes in the Senate 31 votes in the House). A "thank you" is in order to the following legislators who voted in support of this budget:

*Ed Ableser, Jack A. Brown, Olivia Cajero Bedford, Tom Chabin, Steve Farley, Martha Garcia, Linda Lopez, Lynne Pancrazi, Tom Prezelski, Albert Tom, Chad Campbell, Mark DeSimone, David Lujan, Robert Meza, Michele Reagan, David Shapira, Jackie Thrasher, Theresa Ulmer, Nancy Young Wright, Manuel V. Alvarez, David Bradley, Jennifer Burns, Cloves C. Campbell, Jr., Steve M. Gallardo, Pete Hershberger, Phil Lopez, Lucy Mason, Barbara McGuire, Ben R. Miranda, Pete Rios, and Krysten Sinema.*

*Voting "No": Mark Anderson, Andy Biggs, Sam Crump, John Kavanagh, Marian McClure, Nancy McLain, Rick Murphy, Bob Robson, Bob Stump, Steven B. Yarbrough, Kirk Adams, Ray Barnes, Tom Boone, Judy M. Burges, Doug Clark, Eddie Farnsworth, Trish Groe, Bill Konopnicki, John McComish, John B. Nelson, Jonathon Paton, Nancy K. Barto, Rich Crandall, Adam Driggs, Warde V. Nichols, Russell K. Pearce, Andrew M. Tobin, Jerry Weiers, and Jim Weiers.*

In addition, the following bills opposed by VOP failed to pass the Legislature: HCR 2039 (declaring immigrants to be criminal trespassers), HCR 2044 (allowing the Legislature to suspend funding for programs passed by initiative), HB 2258 (requiring landlords to determine legal status of renters) and SB 1079 curtailing eligibility for AHCCS, DES, and requiring legislative appropriation of the state housing fund.

**VOP will NOT meet in August. The next scheduled meeting will be on Wednesday, September 17 at 3:30 p.m. in Vincentian Support Services. To place an item on the agenda, call Lucy Howell (602) 695-1604 or e-mail her at [Howishome@aol.com](mailto:Howishome@aol.com).**