

Welcome to the Legislative Update for February 26, 2009

This e-mail is provided as a courtesy of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. It is our intent to offer the Legislative Update weekly during the 2009 session of the Arizona State Legislature. The purpose of this service is to keep Arizona's seniors and advocates for aging services informed about bills and action taking place at the Legislature. The information provided is intended to help you form your own opinion about an issue and to give you the necessary resources and contacts to help ensure your perspective and voice are heard. *Please note the Legislative Update is non-partisan in nature.* We thank you for your interest!

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

On-going budget discussions related to both Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 continue as lawmakers and state agencies grapple with difficult decisions required to balance the budgets. Some of the continuing discussion is reflected in the Senate and House press releases posted on the Arizona State Legislature website. <http://www.azleg.gov/PressReleases.asp>

You can keep up with various capitol events and rallies by viewing the calendar posted at: <http://www.azleg.gov/aspwebcalendar/calendar.asp>

Senate and House committee agendas are found at: <http://www.azleg.gov/CommitteeAgendas.asp?Body=H&ShowAll=OFF>

Both the Senate and House are adjourned until Monday, March 2nd, but tomorrow, February 27th marks the last day by leadership order for House committees to consider House bills. At the end of day 46 of the 2009 Arizona Legislative Session, 1098 bills have been posted along with 93 memorials and resolutions. Please be advised that the presence of a bill on the Council's web page *does not* represent support or opposition by the Council to that bill. It *does* mean that the bill topic is something that is likely to be of interest to or have an impact on Arizona seniors so the Council is tracking the bill's progress.

STATE LEGISLATION:

Visit the link below to view the Council's web page and the list of bills the Council is tracking.

FULL LIST:

<http://www.azcapitolreports.com/webreport.cfm?webreport=364&listid=13720&print=true>

Highlights of legislative actions taken on bills the Council is tracking include:

H2344: Vulnerable Adults: Financial Exploitation - from House Judiciary Committee with amendment #4099 on 2/26/09.

Up-coming hearings for bills on the Council's FULL List include:

H2513: Reverse Mortgages - Hearing: House Banking & Insurance 3/2/09 2:00 p.m., House Rm. 5.

H2616: Living Wills; Health Care Directives - Hearing: House Health & Human Services 3/4/09 8:00 a.m. House Room 4

H2622: Dependent Children; Relatives; Disclosure - Hearing: House Health & Human Services 3/4/09 8:00 a.m. House Rm. 4

H2629: License Plate Obstruction; Wheelchair Holders - Hearing: House Transportation and Infrastructure 3/5/09 9:00 a.m. House Rm. 3.

Be sure to check the Arizona State Legislature website for agendas and time changes and updates for Senate, House and Joint Legislative Budget committee agendas at:

<http://www.azleg.gov/CommitteeAgendas.asp?Body=H&ShowAll=OFF>

Once we have finished reviewing all the bills that are posted, we will establish the Council's SHORT list - those bills of particular focus as they affect health and safety of older adults.

Note: The website FULL LIST link above provides you with the current status and upcoming hearing information about the bills being tracked by the Council and is available and updated on an ongoing basis, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. We are adding new bills to the website on a weekly basis, but the updated status of any particular bill is available throughout the week using the link. *Information about bill status, hearing, etc. is a purchased service provided by the Arizona Capitol Times.*

Contact Your Policymakers: If you have a particular perspective about anything in a piece of legislation that is being considered, you may voice your thoughts by contacting the:

Governor's Office of Constituent Services at 602-542-4331 or toll-free at 800-253-0883.

Or you may contact the legislator from your area. If you do not know how to reach your local legislator, start at the homepage on the Legislature's website and follow the instructions provided at both the Senate and House Member links.

Arizona State Legislature website: <http://www.azleg.gov/>

FEDERAL LEGISLATION:

H.R. 667

Heroes at Home Act

The Heroes at Home Act of 2009 was introduced by Representative John T. Salazar (D-CO-3) on January 23, 2009.

The intent of the bill is to improve the diagnosis and treatment of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in members and former members of the Armed Forces, to review and expand telehealth and telemental health programs of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a Program on Training and Certification of Family Caregiver Personal Care Attendants and:

- In collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, develop curricula for the training and certification of family caregivers of veterans and members of the Armed Forces with TBI as personal care attendants of such veterans and members.
- Locate programs in each of the medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Develop curricula that includes applicable standards and protocols utilized by certification programs of national brain injury care specialist organizations and utilize and expand upon training curricula developed pursuant to section 744 (b) of the John Warner National Defense Authorization act for Fiscal Year 2007.

In addition, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will:

- Determine the eligibility of a family member of a veteran or member of the Armed Forces for participation in the program with determination made based on clinical needs of the veteran or member of the Armed Forces as determined by the physician of such veteran or member. A family caregiver of a veteran or member of the Armed Forces who receives certification as a personal care attendant will be eligible for compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for care provided to veteran or member.

Costs of Training:

- Any costs of training provided under the program for family members of veterans will be borne by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- The Secretary of Defense will reimburse the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for any costs of training provided under the program for family members of members of the Armed Forces. Amounts for such reimbursement will be derived from amounts available for Defense Health Programs for the TRICARE program.
- Nothing will be construed to require or permit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to deny reimbursement for health care services provided to a veteran with a brain injury to a personal care attendant who is not a family member of such veteran.

Outreach and Public Awareness:

- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs will conduct comprehensive outreach to enhance the awareness of veterans and the general public about the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and TBI and the services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans with such symptoms.
- The Secretary of Veterans Affairs will make available to non-Department of Veterans Affairs health practitioners the best practices developed by the Department for the treatment of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Telehealth and Telemental Health Services:

- The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs will jointly establish a demonstration project to assess the feasibility and advisability of using telehealth technology to assess cognitive function of members and former members who have sustained head trauma, in order to improve the diagnosis and treatment of TBI.
- The Secretary of Defense and Secretary of Veterans Affairs will carry out the demonstration project required and will give priority to locations that would provide services in a rural area.
- The demonstration project requirements include a report to Congress.

The bill was referred to the House Sub Committee on Military Personnel.

Good News for social security recipients! As part of the recently signed federal stimulus package, individuals who get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security benefits will receive a one-time payment of \$250 to. No application is required. For more information, visit: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/payment/>

To view the **Congressional Summary** of the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**, go to: <http://finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2009press/prb021209.pdf>

Contact Your Congressional Member: If you are interested in Congressional bills or wish to share your thoughts or concerns with your federal representatives, find out how to contact your congressional representatives by visiting: <http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House or <http://www.senate.gov/> for members of the Senate.

INFORMATION & RESOURCES:

Senior Action Day - April 1st

As you may recall, in years past the Council on Aging has held events throughout the state or one large event on the Capitol lawn with vendors, food, and an array of activities. **Due to the current economic situation and to be as time and cost efficient as possible, the Council on Aging has decided to restructure and hold one modified event at the Executive Tower building in Phoenix. YOU CAN STILL MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD! We're encouraging older Arizonans and aging advocates to provide your input about important issues via mail, email or phone to share with legislators on that day.**

Mail your input to us at:

_ The Governor's Advisory Council on Aging

1700 W. Washington Street, Suite 240

Phoenix, AZ 85007

OR - **Email us** at: gaca@az.gov

OR - **Call us** at 602-542-4710.

Visit our link for more information:

<http://www.azgovernor.gov/gaca/Newsletter/2009SeniorActionDayFlier.pdf>

If you would like to submit an educational or public service event for consideration, you can do so by sending an email with the description to: gaca@az.gov.

Be sure to visit the Governor's Office on Aging website at: www.azgovernor.gov/aging .

Thank you and have a great week!

~Governor's Advisory Council on Aging _

If you wish to be REMOVED from or know someone who would like to be ADDED to the Update, please send an email to: gaca@az.gov and ask to be unsubscribed or subscribed to the **Legislative Update**.