

## Welcome to the Legislative Update for August 7, 2009

This e-mail is provided as a courtesy of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. The purpose of this service is to keep Arizona's seniors and advocates for aging services informed about bills and actions taking place at the Arizona State Legislature and to highlight Congressional bills or happenings affecting older Americans. This information is intended to help you shape your own opinion about an issue and to give you the necessary resources and contacts so that you can ensure your perspective and voice are heard. *The Legislative Update is non-partisan in nature.* Thank you for your interest!

### **GENERAL OVERVIEW:**

#### **2010 Budget:**

No 2010 budget. Both the House and the Senate convened today but adjourned until Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. The deadline to pass a bill that would set a November special election for the sales tax increase appears to be next week, now. To review the budget bills, look for SB 1020-1029 and HB 2006-2015 on the Councils Third Special Session list provided under Legislation below.

To view the latest **Monthly Fiscal Highlights** report from the Joint Legislative Budget Committee outlining the current revenue shortfall, go to:

<http://www.azleg.gov/jlbc/mfh-jul-09.pdf>

#### **Legislation:**

To help track legislation during the Third Special Session, the Council created the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Session List which is being updated according to legislative actions.

3<sup>rd</sup> Special Session List:

<http://www.azcapitolreports.com/webreport.cfm?webreport=471&listid=16365&print=true>

#### **Other News**

Governor Brewer announced the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for Arizona's State Energy Plan. To read more, go to:

[http://www.azgovernor.gov/dms/upload/PR\\_080709\\_StateEnergyProgram.pdf](http://www.azgovernor.gov/dms/upload/PR_080709_StateEnergyProgram.pdf)

Other **Latest News** can be viewed at the Governors Website:

<http://www.azgovernor.gov/>

#### **FYI**

Once the special session has ended, the Legislative Update will be provided monthly with a federal focus.

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**During the Third Special Session: You can still contact your policymakers.** If you have a particular perspective about budget proposals 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 under *How do I find My Legislators* or follow the instructions provided at both the Senate and House Member links at the website.

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

## **FEDERAL LEGISLATION:**

### **S.728**

#### **Veterans' Insurance and Benefits Enhancement Act of 2009**

The bill was introduced on 3/26/2009 by Senator Daniel K. Akaka (HI).

S.728 is intended to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance veterans' insurance benefits, and for other purposes.

The bill:

- Directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to grant level-premium term life insurance to veterans under age 65 with service-connected disabilities.
- Increases from \$20,000 to \$30,000 the maximum amount of supplemental insurance provided through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for totally disabled veterans.
- Removes a condition on the qualification of certain individuals for retroactive benefits from traumatic injury coverage under Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.
- Increases the maximum loan guarantee amount under the veterans' mortgage life insurance program from \$90,000 to \$150,000, then to \$200,000 after January 1, 2012.
- Establishes an annual cost-of-living adjustment for the temporary payment of dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) to a veteran's surviving spouse with one or more children under the age of 18.
- Provides eligibility requirements for the payment of a special monthly pension based on disability for veterans who already qualify for a service pension based upon age.
- Increases amounts of DIC payable to surviving spouses and parents of deceased veterans.
- Increases, and authorizes the annual adjustment of, pension amounts payable to hospitalized veterans and certain children of veterans of a period of war.
- Authorizes and directs the Secretary to pay a: (1) supplemental benefit for the funeral and burial expenses of veterans, making such amount \$900 with respect to a non-service-connected death and \$2,100 with respect to a service-connected death; and (2) supplemental burial plot allowance for veterans eligible for the current allowance.
- Authorizes the provision of specially adapted housing assistance for disabled veterans whose disability is due to a severe burn injury.
- Authorizes the Secretary to pay a supplemental benefit, for assistance in the purchase of automobiles and other conveyances, for disabled veterans currently eligible for such assistance.

On 5/21/2009, S.728 was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

**H.R. 3293**, which makes appropriations for the U.S. Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, was placed on the Senate Legislative Calendar on August 4, 2009. As taken from the House Reports 111-220, here are a few **recommendations** that may be of interest:

*National Health Service Corps: Recruitment* - The Committee provides \$102,114,000 for NHSC recruitment activities. The NHSC program awards scholarships to health professions students and assists graduates in repaying their student loans.

*Geriatric Programs* - The Geriatric Programs are comprised of three activities: (1) Geriatric Education Centers; (2) the Geriatric Training Program for physicians, dentists, and behavioral health professionals; and (3) Geriatric Academic Career Awards. This funding will support 54 Geriatric Education Centers, 14 Geriatric Training grants, and 98 Geriatric Academic Career Awards.

*Comprehensive Geriatric Nurse Education* - The Committee provides \$4,567,000 for Comprehensive Geriatric Nurse Education. The Comprehensive Geriatric Nurse Education program supports grants for: (1) providing training to individuals who will provide geriatric care; (2) develop and disseminate curricula relating to the treatment of the health care problems of elderly individuals; (3) train faculty members in geriatrics; and (4) provide continuing education to individuals who provide geriatric care. In fiscal year 2010, 27 training projects are expected to be funded.

*Oral Health* - The Committee recognizes that reducing disparities in oral disease will require additional and sustained support in proven strategies at the State and local levels. The Committee provides funding for States to strengthen their capacities to assess the prevalence of oral diseases and the associated health burden, to target resources and interventions and prevention programs to the underserved, and to evaluate changes in policies and programs. The Committee encourages CDC to advance efforts to reduce the health disparities and burden from oral diseases, including those that are linked to chronic diseases.

*Home and Community-Based Supportive Services* - The Committee provides \$371,348,000 for Home and Community- Based Supportive Services. States allocate funds based on local needs, funding services such as transportation, case management, information and referral, in-home care, adult day care, and physical fitness programs. Funding also supports multi-purpose senior centers, which coordinate and integrate services for the elderly. In fiscal year 2010, this funding will support approximately 26 million rides to doctor's offices grocery stores, pharmacies, senior centers, meal sites, and other critical daily activities; 32 million hours of personal care, homemaker, and chore services; nine million hours of adult day care; and four million hours of case management services.

*Nutrition Services* - The Committee provides \$829,205,000 for Nutrition Services, which is \$19,462,000 more than the fiscal year 2009 funding level and the budget request. The Nutrition Services program includes Congregate Nutrition Services, Home-Delivered Nutrition Services and the Nutrition Services Incentive Program.

For more information specific to these bills, go to the Thomas website <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and enter the bill number under *Search Bill Summary & Status*.

**Other News:**

A recent report on global aging outlines the effects of the extraordinary increase in the worlds aging population. You can view *An Aging World: 2008 International Population Reports* at:

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p95-09-1.pdf>

**Did you know?**

This week the widening of U.S. 60 or Grand Avenue in the northwest Valley - became the 6,000th highway project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

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**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.

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**INFORMATION & RESOURCES:**

**What: Banner Alzheimer's Institute's 6th Annual conference on Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia in Native Americans, "Weaving the Old with the New: Challenges, Solutions and Hope for Caregivers"**

**When: September 18, 2009, Desert Diamond Casino & Hotel** in Tucson; the conference is free of charge but registration *is required*.

**For more information:** Call Filmer Lallo, Coordinator for the Native American Program at Banner Alzheimer's Institute; phone number (602) 239-6858.

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**WHAT: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual West Valley Senior Games** provided by West Valley Recreation  
**WHEN: Saturday, November 21, 2009, 7:30 a.m. 2:00 p.m.**, Friendship Park, 12325 W. McDowell Rd., Avondale AZ 85323

**Pre-Registration required;** registration forms available online at: <http://www.westvalleyrecreation.com/> or call (623-333-2413 for general information.

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**WHAT: Eighteenth Annual Elder Issues Conference,** Sponsored by NACOG, Area Agency on Aging, Region III  
**WHEN: Wednesday, September 30, 2009, 8:30 - 4:30 pm,** High Country Conference Center, 201 West Butler Avenue, Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
**To register or for more information,** call 1-877-521-3500

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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](mailto:gaca@az.gov). Please note: we try to include events of interest to older Arizonans and aging service advocates.

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**Thank you and have a great week!**  
**~Governor's Advisory Council on Aging**