



## Legislative Update

Sunday, March 6, 2011

This update is published regularly during the General Session, monthly during the interim, and other times as needed. This update highlights the various issues that will be heard by the legislature during the Legislative Session that may affect low-income Utahns.

Our legislative priorities list can be found [HERE](#).

## The Budget

We are in the last week of the 2011 Legislative Session. The budget discussions continue and Appropriations Subcommittees have finalized their budget cut recommendations and priority lists. The leadership has put together funding priorities and have met with their caucus to talk about backfills. The Executive Appropriations Committee is scheduled to make backfills Monday, March 7, 2011.

Backfills can be found [HERE](#).

## Alerts and News from the Hill

**Asset Building**

**CAP Utah keeps a running Legislative Agenda list on its website that tracks priority bills and provides updates on the status of any legislation that may affect low-income Utahns. It can be found [HERE](#) and will be updated regularly throughout the session.**

**Legislative Agendas and Minutes can be found on the [Utah Legislature's Website](#)**

**Call your elected officials**

Governor's office - (800) 705-2464

House - (800) 908-4261

Senate - (801) 538-1035

**Who is your legislator?**

Find out by inserting your address [here](#).

**Advocates Calendar**

EITC/VITA has survived the first round of cuts and will likely get additional, ongoing funding. The Individual Development Account (IDA) program has had initial funding cuts restored with ongoing funds. Both EITC/VITA and IDA's are listed on the Leadership's backfill items.

SCR 2 - "Financial Responsibility and Concurrent Resolution," Senator Jones' bill that encourages Utahns to take advantage of the financial stability resources in the state, has passed both chambers and signed by the Governor.

SB 189, which would create a refundable low-income tax credit and adjusts the states sales and use tax rate passed Senate Committee and is on the Senate Second Reading Calendar.

### **Education**

Education funding is a big concern up at the capitol and various bills are seeking to address the need to fund enrollment increases.

SB 38 "K-3 Reading Amendments" has passed both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature. The bill would amend deadlines related to the mid-year assessment of first, second, and third grade students.

SJR 9 is currently circled on the 2nd reading calendar of the Senate. This controversial resolution asks for an amendment to the Utah Constitution to move the control and supervision of the public education system from the municipalities to the Governor.

Attempts to extend optional full-day kindergarten have yet to be successful. HB 111 is currently being held in the House Education Committee.

SB 65 has been brought back after dying on the Senate floor and passed the Senate and now introduced in the House. The bill would create the Statewide Online Education Program to enable a student to earn high school graduation credit through the completion of online courses.

The Family Investment Coalition's Advocate's Caucus will be held every Wednesday during the General Session from 12:15 - 1:15 in the Olmstead Room of the Senate (East) Building. We will discuss the budget, our legislative priorities, and collaborate with other advocates. For more information, contact [Drew Martinez](#).

## **Work Supports**

SB 19 , which allows the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) to restructure the regional workforce councils, has passed both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

Cuts to the DWS budget will come in the form of a reduction of 142 full-time employees over the next year through attrition and through the Department finding other efficiencies. This leaves the General Assistance program intact, though it is still funded at it's 2011 level.

## **Housing**

Both the Olene Walker Housing Loan Fund and the Pamela Atkinson Trust Fund are being funded at the 2011 level.

HB 101 which would provide protections to Mobile Homeowners failed in committee. HB 332 which would essentially dismantle low-income utility assistance has been abandoned by the sponsor.

SB 154 which would have provided benefits and protections to Utah's renters failed in a 2-2-2 vote in committee.

HB 287 has been amended to send the bill to interim. Legislation would distribute the Department of Community and Culture throughout the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Department of Workforce Services.

Rep. Seelig's HB 403 that prohibits landlords from taking action against a renter for assisting public safety agencies while participating in the Good Landlord Program. Also, protects owners from municipalities that would limit the owner's participation in benefits from the Good Landlord Program if they don't pursue renters that contact the police.

SB 220 would create the Intermountain Weatherization

Training Fund and has passed the Senate and introduced in the House.

### **Health and Human Services**

Rep. Menlove's HB211 has passed both chambers and is headed to the Governor's desk. This bill would require clients of Utah's Primary Care Network (PCN) to participate in community service hours to continue to receive coverage, if they are so able.

Sen. Robles' SB41 is still being held in the Senate Rules Committee. The bill would allow legal immigrant children to receive medical assistance and CHIP in Utah regardless of how long they have been in the country.

HB 256, a bill that would reduce barriers to enrolling and staying on CHIP and Medicaid through the use of technology, has passed the House and is on the Senate Third Reading Calendar.

### **Immigration**

Immigration is a hot topic up at the Capitol this session and there are multiple bills that seek to address the immigration issue, ranging from enforcement to guest worker programs.

Probably the most controversial bill, Sen. Sandstrom's HB 497 (substitute of HB 70) which seeks to install similar enforcement mechanisms as the Arizona Immigration Bill, has passed both the House and Senate and awaiting the Governor's signature. Sandstrom had to remove the words "reasonable suspicion" from his original bill to get the Senate to pass the legislation.

As a compromise HB 116, sponsored by Representative Bill Wright, which allows undocumented immigrants to acquire a permit to work in Utah, passed both chambers as well.

SB 47, a bill that would make driver's license exams for refugees available in a variety of languages has passed both chambers and is headed to the Governor's Office.

Unsubscribe [fblanc@xmission.com](mailto:fblanc@xmission.com) from this list.

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