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THE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Thursday, October 22, 2009

This update is published weekly during the General Session and monthly during the Interim and Special Sessions.

The Legislature NEEDS MONEY

A Discussion of Revenue Enhancements:

On Friday November 6th from 11:30 until 1:00 the Family Investment Coalition will be hosting a "revenue enhancements" meeting and webinar at the main branch of the Salt Lake Public Library.

Please mark your calendars.

The Legislature will be facing a HUGE budget shortfall. We want to talk about an approach that balances cuts to state programs - for a third consecutive year - with the benefit of targeted measures to increase state revenue. Utah faces a revenue problem, not a spending problem.

The Family Investment Coalition be looking to join with other groups to highlight our common concerns and interests.

Alerts and News from the Hill

Social Security Offset:

The Workforce Services and Community and Economic Development Interim Committee voted unanimously to end the Social Security Offset. The Offset currently reduces the amount of unemployment insurance benefits by half of what recipients receive in social security retirement benefits. A compromise was reached whereby all weekly unemployment benefits will be reduced by \$3 in order to cover the cost of the elimination of the Offset. This is great news for seniors who have any kind of retirement that is used to offset their unemployment insurance; they will now be treated the same as everyone else. It is also good for employers who are currently facing difficult times and a dwindling unemployment insurance trust fund. The bill will now wait until the General Session for a vote, and if it passes, will go into effect in the summer of 2010.

Department of Workforce Services:

Deputy Director Chris Love will be retiring from DWS in January after serving 35 years. Jon Pierpont will be replacing him as Deputy Director, while still continuing on as the Director of the new Eligibility Services Division and taking charge of the Demand Driven Employment Services Division that is currently under development. We will be sad to see Chris Love go, but are more than confident that Jon Pierpont will be able to do a great job in the new position.

Real Estate Transfer Tax:

The Holy Grail of housing trust fund revenue sources - the real estate transfer tax - will likely be discussed next month in the Revenue and Tax Interim Committee. The committee will look at the Joint Resolution Prohibiting Property Transfer Tax. This resolution does just what it says, including looking for an amendment to prohibit the tax in Utah Constitution Article XIII. Such a prohibition will tie future legislators' hands, taking away a potential (affordable housing) funding source that 35 states currently utilize.


Impact Fees:

The Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Interim Committee discussed impact fees on Wednesday. This issue was brought forth by Senator Buttars who expressed concern that municipalities have no oversight regarding the imposition of impact fees.

Impact fees can affect the development of "affordable housing" in that these costs increase the final price of housing. Some argue that these fees can make the development of affordable housing impossible in high impact fee areas.



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Advocate's Calendar

The Family Investment Coalition's Advocate's Caucus will be held every Legislative Interim Session (and any Special Sessions) in the cafeteria in the Senate (East) Building on Wednesdays from 12:30 pm until 1:30 pm. We will discuss our legislative agendas, talk about items of interest, and collaborate with other advocates.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Be an Advocate

Keep informed: all legislative agendas and audio of committee meetings are available [here](#).

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