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STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As of Monday, February 21 the Arizona State Legislature has convened for 43-days. Over that time, a total of 1,528 bills and 97 memorials/resolutions have been introduced.

Last Friday (Feb 17), was the final day that bills needed to pass out of committee in their chamber of origin to still be considered active. As a result, hundreds of bills failed to advance through their original committee and are unlikely to move forward this year (at least in their current form). Lawmakers will now focus on strike-everything amendments and the nearly 800 proposals that are still active this session. A “strike-everything amendment” is a proposed amendment that would delete the entire text of the existing bill and substitute new language.

The next major deadline will be on March 24th, which is the final day that Senate bills need to pass House committees and House bills need to pass Senate committees to still be considered active.

Budget Update. Republicans succeeded in their efforts to send a “baseline budget” to Governor Hobbs this week, after the lone Republican holdout, Rep. Liz Harris (R-Chandler) overcame her concerns and joined her colleagues to approve the plan. The Governor vetoed the bills shortly after they reached her desk, saying the Republicans’ approach “[kicks the can down the road.](#)” It remains unclear when budget negotiations between the Governor and legislative leaders will begin because there has been no communication between them up to this point.

The Republican budget package would have continued state spending from last year, removing one-time appropriations and adding dollars for formulaic growth in education and AHCCCS programs (Medicaid).

This Week. As the legislature moves past the first big committee hearing deadline, most committees are not meeting this week. Instead, legislators will spend long hours in floor sessions voting on bills that have already passed committees. In addition, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees will meet to consider dozens of proposals on state spending.

Governor Nominations. Governor Hobbs withdrew her nomination of Dr. Theresa Cullen to serve as the Director of the Department of Health Services on Tuesday, but not before the Senate voted on party lines against confirming Dr. Cullen for the job.

The full Senate has not yet voted on any other executive nominations. The Senate Committee on Director Nominations recommended the approval of Angela Rodgers to serve as the Director of Economic Security and is scheduled to [meet next week](#) to consider the Governor’s nominees to lead the Department of Administration, Department of Environmental Quality, and Department of Transportation.