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The Legislative Update

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

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

Alerts and News from the Hill

Wednesday, June 17, 2009 is Interim Day for the Legislature.

The Legislative Ethics Interim Committee is meeting Wednesday for the second time. It is the only committee in the legislature that has an equal number of democrats and republicans. So far it has been determined that it would be unconstitutional to create an independent ethics commission. For more information, click [here](#).

Things to Watch This Week

Note, times are only approximates, and taken from the Legislature's agendas, and are subject to change.

Business and Labor Interim Committee, 9:00 a.m., Room 210 Senate Building:

The fifth agenda item on the list scheduled at 10:50 is “Issues Related to Transactions: Division of Real Estate.” While none of the particulars of this item are necessarily related to affordable housing, you never know when something will unexpectedly pop-up.

Health and Human Services Interim Committee, 9:00 a.m., Room 250 State Capitol:

The third agenda item, scheduled for 9:35 will consider the Department of Human Services' request for policy guidance on how to manage services provided by the Division of Services for People with Disabilities in light of budget reductions made during the 2009 General Session.

Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Interim Committee, 9:00 a.m., Room 30 House Building:

The fourth agenda item, scheduled for 9:50 will look at the potential Consolidation of State Agency Functions, in essence they will be looking at ways to consolidate various state agencies and functions.

The seventh agenda item will evaluate the first year of the Four-Day Work Week for State Employees Program. Specifically they will be addressing how the new hours are affecting employee productivity and customer and employee satisfaction, and what savings have been realized.

Education Interim Committee, 9:00 a.m., Room 445 State Capitol:

Item four on the agenda will study possible approaches to accelerate the number of engineers trained in the state.

Transportation Interim Committee, 2:00 p.m., Room 20 House Building:

The second agenda item will have the Committee receive a report on paratransit services that are provided by the Utah Transit Authority (UTA). Recently UTA has made a proposal to raise the prices for paratransit services and limit the distance they will be offered.

Workforce Services and Community and Economic Development Interim Committee, 2:00 p.m., Room 450 State Capitol:

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) will report on its new Eligibility Services Division (ESD) and on the progress of the eREP Computer System's implementation at 2:05.

At 2:45, Bill Starks of DWS is scheduled to discuss the solvency of Utah's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which has been impacted by the increase in job losses over the past year.

Agenda item five will look at whether to require Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients to periodically undergo a drug test.

Interim Study Items:

Currently, the Interim Committees are looking into items from the Master Study List, HJR 21. The Master Study List is made up of items the legislature wants to learn more about during the interim session. Many of the items are bills from the previous session that were not passed, or bills Legislators are considering running in the next general session. The Executive Appropriations Committee met today at 1:00 p.m. and had "Assignment of Interim Studies" as an agenda item, though many studies have already been assigned to a committee. We will give you more information about their discussion in the next Legislative Update. Some of the Interim Study Items that we will be following:

Foreclosure Impact - to study the effect of foreclosure on renters.

Interest on Escrow - to study whether to require mortgage holders to pay interest on escrow collected to mortgage accounts.

Impact Fees - to study impact fees on building development by cities, towns, and counties.

Earned Income Tax Credit - to study whether to enact a refundable earned income tax credit (H.B. 133).

Community Development and Renewal - to study the modification of community

development and renewal agencies (S.B. 205).

Olene Walker Housing Trust Fund - to study permanent funding sources (including designating a portion of the state liquor tax profits).

Medicaid Asset Test – to study the elimination of the Medicaid asset test (H.J.R. 22).

Substance Abuse – to study strategies to address the prevention of substance abuse.

Tax Impact – to study the impact of the flat tax and the removal of deductions on fixed income families.

Drug Testing of Welfare Recipients – to study whether to require welfare recipients to periodically undergo a drug test.

Unemployment Insurance – to study and review changes to the qualifications for unemployment benefits, including causes for denial of benefits and disqualifications from receiving benefits (H.B. 428).

Work Programs for Higher Education Students without Lawful Immigration Status – to study the creation of a work program or work opportunities for students without lawful immigration status who have graduated from high school and are attending, or plan to attend, in-state higher education institutions.

Consolidating State Functions – to study ways to consolidate various state agencies and functions.

[Advocates Calendar](#)

The Family Investment Coalition's Advocate's Caucus will be held every third Wednesday during the 2009 Interim Session in the cafeteria in the Senate (East) Building from 12:30 pm until 1:30 pm. We will discuss our legislative agendas, talk about Interim items of interest, and collaborate with other advocates.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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