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The Capitol Voice

Your Monthly NFIB Legislative Update

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AZ DEPT. OF HEALTH SEEKING COMMENTS ON PROPOSED RULES ON THE VOTER-APPROVED SMOKING BAN

- All interested businesses should submit comments -



In November 2006, voters approved a state-wide smoking ban. The new law takes effect on May 1, 2007, and will require restaurants, bars and most businesses to be smoke free.

In order to implement the new law, the Arizona Department of Health is drafting rules that will provide direction to restaurants, bars and businesses. In the draft proposal, the Dept. of Health has included a suggested "15 foot rule" for entrances. That is, smoking will not be allowed within 15 feet of entrances, windows or ventilation systems.

The public hearings on the proposed exempt rules will be held at the following locations and dates:

- **Phoenix:** March 6, 10:00 a.m. State Health Laboratory Conference Room, 250 N. 17th Ave.
- **Tucson:** March 7, 11:00 a.m. Pima County Board of Supervisors Hearing Room, Pima County Administration Building, 130 W. Congress St.
- **Flagstaff:** March 8, 1:00 p.m. Coconino County Board of Supervisors First Floor Meeting Room, Coconino County Administration Building, 219 E. Cherry Ave.

The formal written comment period for the proposed exempt rules will run from February 2 through 5:00 p.m., March 8, 2007.

The Notice of Proposed Exempt Rulemaking that contains the information about the public hearings is available at: www.azdhs.gov/diro/admin_rules/smoke_free.htm.

If you submitted comments on a draft version of the proposed exempt rules and still have comments, you must resubmit your comments for them to be considered or you may submit additional comments during the formal written comment period. Comments received by the Department after 5:00 p.m., March 8, 2007, will not be considered.

For additional information:

To help business owners and residents understand the Smoke-free Arizona Act, the Arizona Department of Health has launched an informational telephone line and a Web site.

The free information line at 1-877-AZ STOPS (1-877-297-8677) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The web site, www.smokefreearizona.org, provides comprehensive information on the Act.

Arizona Minimum Wage Law Update: Developmentally disabled workers are subject to the new state minimum-wage



On February 7th, Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard announced that developmentally disabled workers are subject to the new state minimum wage law, passed by the voters in November 2006.

Last week, HB 2318, a bill that would exempt workers and allow them to continue receiving lower pay, was supported unanimously in a legislative committee hearing. With Mr. Goddard's recent ruling, it could ruin the chances of the bill.

There is no word on whether advocates of this exemption will seek to amend the minimum wage law through the ballot in November 2008.

Resources:

Arizona Republic: Goddard: Wage law applies to disabled
<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0208minwage0208.html>

Arizona Republic: Bill exempts disabled from new wage law
<http://www.azcentral.com/news/articles/0201minwage0201.html>

Arizona Republic: Low-wage exemption needed
<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/opinions/articles/0131wed1-31.html>

Rep. Jonathan Paton Returns from Iraq



At the end of February, Rep. Jonathan Paton (Tucson) returned from active duty in Iraq. He had been serving in Iraq since late summer.

On February 27th, Rep. Paton was sworn in to office and presented with the flag that was placed on his desk last month by seatmate Rep. Marian McClure, his seat mate. When attendance was called, Paton was allowed to be the first member to register his presence.

If you need help finding the contact information for your lawmakers, please go to

www.NFIB.com/AZ

click on "2007 Legislative Contact Information."

We also post updates on the legislation as the bill moves through the 2007 session.

Budget Meetings Winding Down for House; Ramping up for Senate



- House Republican lawmakers have been conducting small group meetings with caucus members over the last few weeks to discuss the state budget and the policy issues associated with the budget. Republican leadership will soon seek feedback on what lawmakers deem as budget priorities and what should be eliminated from the budget.
- House Democrats have concluded their budget meetings and have developed a list of approximately twenty priorities. To date, we have not been provided with their priority list.
- The Senate is taking up budget discussions, beginning the week of March 5th. The Senate Appropriations Committee will be hosting several budget workshops throughout the week.

Issues Moving at the State Capitol

Check www.NFIB.com/AZ for detailed information on these and other policy issues.

- **Workers' Compensation/Drugs and Alcohol in the workplace:** On February 28, HB 2405 passed the Senate Commerce Committee with 6 "yes" votes and zero "no" votes. The bill now moves to the full Senate for consideration.
- **Uniform Health Insurance Application:** On March 1st, HB 2134 passed the Senate Health Committee with 7 "yes" votes and zero "no" votes. The bill now moves to the Senate FIIR Committee for a hearing.
- **Business Personal Property Tax:** On February 22nd, Reps Michele Reagan (Scottsdale), and Ben Miranda (Phoenix) held a press conference regarding HCR2037, a measure that would increase the business personal property tax exemption for businesses to the first \$150,000 in value from the current \$50,000 plus inflation. The Joint Legislative Budget Committee estimates a direct impact on the general fund of \$3 million.

George Yogurtian leaves NFIB/AZ



NFIB/AZ congratulates George and thanks him for his 3 years of service with the organization.

He has been a tremendous asset to the organization, and dedicated to the workers' comp program and the safety committee. He has truly served the members well.

NFIB/AZ wishes George the best of luck as he pursues his next endeavor as a small business owner.

NFIB member speaks in committee



Leadership Council Chairman Michael Crowe went to the Capital to testify in committee on corporate and personal income tax reduction.

If you are interested in creating a relationship with your lawmakers please NFIB/AZ office at (602) 263-7690.

contact Debbie Kimmick in the

Make your own voice heard!

Need a speaker for your event?

NFIB/Arizona would like to come to your organization and discuss topics that are important to the small business owners in your community.

Programs last approximately 15 – 30 minutes and there is no honorarium or expenses on your part.

Topics can include but not limited to:

- State regulations and how they affect small business employers and their employees
- Grassroots: Empowering small business to make a difference at the state and federal capitols
- An overview of the Arizona legislative session
- How the political climate affects small business

To Schedule a speaker for your next event, contact the NFIB/Arizona office.

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