

Legislative Report – 2021

The 2021 legislative session began January 11th, delayed a week due to COVID. The Governor's budget was presented on January 8th the 2021-2022 budget is \$227 billion with \$21 billion in reserves. Strangely enough while many Californians are unemployed, because of our high income earners, we have a onetime budget surplus of \$15 billion, the LAO states the onetime windfall is likely \$26 billion, available for this year only.

To address the continuing COVID issues, he highlighted his “early action proposals”

1. Vaccinations against COVID 19 – focusing on getting people vaccinated; \$4.4 billion is for COVID relief - \$2 billion for testing; \$473 million for contact tracing and \$372 for vaccines; much of the money will come from the federal government and an emergency fund so he doesn't need legislative approval

2. Safely reopening schools – schools will receive a “record investment of \$85.5 billion”; \$2 billion to help schools transition to in person learning; \$4.6 billion to help students recover from the impacts of the epidemic and \$400 million for school based mental health services; \$2 billion will cover COVID testing, ventilation and PPE; the youngest children will be brought back first TK-2nd grade

3. Supporting small businesses - \$4 billion will create jobs and help them recover from the downturn due to COVID, \$575 million in small business grants will be made available, also fee waiver in the amount of \$71 million

4. Putting money in people's pockets - \$12 -\$13 minimum wage took effect January 1st; state will give \$600 million stimulus payments for those making less than \$30,000/year – the Golden State Stimulus which is \$2.3 billion
Approximately 4 million will be eligible for this payment; the federal funds provide \$600 for those making less than \$75,000. Additionally the CA Earned Income Tax Credit will benefit those making less than \$30,000. This will also extend the eviction moratorium.

5. Wildfire preparedness – adding \$1 billion to address emergency response and funding to support 30 new fire crews - \$143.3 million, \$48 million for Black Hawk helicopters and large air tankers, \$39 million for LiDAR remote sensing and \$17.3 million to enhance the earthquake early warning system

The summaries of his press conferences have provided updates on the first 4 proposals and as of this week:

Legislators approve \$7.6 billion COVID19 economic relief package to include:
\$2.1 billion grants and fee waivers – restaurants, personal service business
\$2 billion in tax breaks for businesses expected this week – annual gross up to \$2.5 million are eligible
\$600/week for those making \$30,000 or less
\$1200 for those who qualify for EITC
Governor signed trailer bills on February 23rd

Still in discussion/hearings on school re-openings – SB 86
hearings outlined the gaps between legislators, governor and school districts; however it appears schools will begin to open in March, many in hybrid mode, outstanding issue is vaccinations for teachers.

Over 2400 bills were introduced by the deadline and the following are bills of interest:

AB 392 (Nazarian) - Clinical laboratories: total protein test: authorization

Clean up language – AB 2199 chaptered last session
will extend authorization indefinitely for staff in licensed plasma center to perform total protein test using a digital refractometer and delete requirement that results that be verified in a specified manner

AB 607 (Arambula) – Sales and use taxes: exemptions: blood screening testing

sponsored by Central California Blood Center - Exemption from sales and use tax for blood screening tests performed on donated blood

AB 1120 (Irwin) – Clinical laboratories: blood withdrawal

expands the scope of clinical lab personnel to include blood collection through use of FDA approved new technology – vascular access device

AB 1374 (Mullin) –Driver’s license: organ donation

revise the questions regarding enrollment in the Organ and Tissue Donor Registry on the application for a driver’s license or identification card - clean up language, reflecting an MOU with DMV and Donate Life

AB 1494 (Fong) – Blood bank: collection

Authorizes RN to provide assistance either on site or via telehealth during blood collection if a MD is not physically present; current requirement has been lifted due to COVID 19 executive order

A full bill folder will be reviewed by the Legislative committee. Many of the bills in the folder relate to employer/employee issues as well measures that codify executive and emergency orders on COVID.