

From the UNM Retiree Association Legislative Committee:

We are beginning the 2nd week for the 56th Legislative session. The session opened the first week with some unexpected upheaval and changes to the old guard. Representative Javier Martinez, District 11-Albuquerque, was elected Speaker of the House, as a replacement for Representative Brian Egolf who decided not to run for office in 2022. Later in the day, Representative Patricia Lundstrum, District 9-Gallup, a 22-year veteran and 6-year chair of the powerful House Appropriations and Finance Committee was removed from her position and Representative Nathan Small, District-Las Cruces, replaced her as the chair of HAFC. Representative Meredith Dixon, District 20-Albuquerque, moved into Representative Small's former position as Vice Chair of the HAFC.

Both parties in the House of Representatives had a change of leadership. Seven new House leaders were appointed and all seven are new to their leadership roles. As previously noted, the new Speaker is Representative Javier Martinez. The other additions to the new Democratic leadership team are Majority Leader Gail Chassey, District 18 – Albuquerque; Majority Whip Reena Szczepanski, District 47-Santa Fe; and Majority Caucus Chair Raymundo Lara, District 34-Chamberino. On the Republican side, the leadership team includes Minority Leader Ryan Lane, District 3 - Aztec; Minority Whip Jason Harper, District 57-Rio Rancho; and Minority Caucus Chair Gail Armstrong, District 49-Magdalena.

Senator Mimi Stewart, District 17-Albuquerque, a retired educator, was re-elected as President Pro-temp of the Senate. Senator Stewart sponsored both Senate Bill 36, Contributions to the Educational Retirement, in 2022 and SB 42, Increase Ed Retirement Contributions, in 2021. Both bills passed and increased the state/employer contribution rate to our ERB pension fund.

During the first week of the session, time is spent with introductions, orientations, and filing or introducing bills, joint memorials, and resolutions. By last Friday, 284 pieces of legislation were pre-filed. UNM Retiree Association will be watching as our New Mexico legislators roll up their sleeves to tackle the issues facing education and retirees.

Committee testimony can be given via ZOOM and committee and floor hearings can be watched by the public via webcast.

UNM RA IS TRACKING THE FOLLOWING BILLS:

ERB:

SB 20, CHANGES TO ERB

Sponsor: Senator Gay Kernan

Synopsis: This bill will provide an exception to allow certain contracts of the ERB to exceed four years pursuant to the procurement code and allow eligible employees of the Southwest New Mexico (Carlsbad) to participate in the Alternative Retirement Plan.

Status: Assigned to Senate Education Committee

Current Location: Scheduled to be heard in the Senate Education Committee, Wednesday, January 25.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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Senator Gay Kernan

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Senator Shannon Pinto

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BUDGET:

HB 2, GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2023

Sponsors: Rep. Nathan Small and Rep. Meredith Dixon

Synopsis: Making general appropriations and authorizing expenditures by state agencies by law.

Status: Introduced 1/19/23 and scheduled to be heard Monday, January 23.

Current Location: Scheduled to be heard by the House Appropriations & Finance Committee, Monday, January 23, 1:30 PM – Room 307.

SB 158, GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT OF 2023

Sponsor: Senator George Munoz

Synopsis: Making general appropriations and authorizing expenditures by state agencies by law.

Status: Scheduled to be heard in SFC on Monday, January 23.

Current Location: Scheduled to be heard by the Senate Finance Committee, Monday, January 23, 9 AM or call of the Chair.

Over the session, we will update you on legislation we are following and their progress.

Please stay tuned for future updates!

IT IS UP TO ALL OF US, RETIREES AND THOSE STILL WORKING, TO PROTECT OUR BENEFITS!!! WHAT CAN YOU DO??

- Track the bill – State bill finder site - https://nmlegis.gov/Legislation/Bill_Finder
- Sign up with UNM Government and Community Relations to receive bill updates and alerts – <https://govrel.unm.edu/updates/index.html>.
- UNM 2023 Legislative Priorities -
- <https://govrel.unm.edu/.../2022-legislative-priorities3.pdf>
- Know your state senators and representatives contact information before you really need it - Find your legislator by address - https://www.nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_By_Address
- Write, call, or tweet legislators and ask them to protect your pension and the COLA - CAPITOL SWITCHBOARD - (505-986-4300) & [#nmlegis](https://twitter.com/nmlegis)

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION CALENDAR:

- Monday, January 3 – Friday, January 13 - Legislation may be pre-filed.
- Tuesday, January 17 - Opening day (noon)

- Thursday, February 16 - Deadline for introduction (Note: a legislation, dummy bill can be introduced at any time.)
- Saturday, March 18 - Session ends (noon)
- Friday, April 7 - Legislation not acted upon by the governor is pocket vetoed.
- Friday, June 16 - The effective date of legislation, not a general appropriation bill or a bill carrying an emergency clause or other specified date.

We hope this update is helpful. We so appreciate all our Legislative Committee does for UNM Retirees.

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