Spring 2020 Prime Times – Government Liaison

Team: Tara Roesler, Lobbyist, Jeri Meeks, Lobbyist, Pat Schneider, William Stasi

The 54th Legislature Second Regular Session opened on January 13, 2020 and per Governor Ducey’s State of the State address his priorities for this year are securing the state’s water future, expanding economic opportunities while preparing against future economic downturns, keeping students safe, protecting public safety while reducing prison populations and investing in public education – with a focus on results, resources and reforms.

ASU’s Legislative Advocacy Breakfast was held on January 10, 2019. Along with touting ASU’s academic and research achievements, Dr. Crow talked about the University’s (new) Design Aspirations to “leverage our place” by embracing our cultural, socioeconomic and physical setting, “transform society” by being connected to social needs and be “socially embedded” by connecting with communities through mutually beneficial partnerships. These aspirations, along with ASU’s standing goals of impactful research, encouraging innovation and dedication to student success, support the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR) new Workforce Development business plan. This a new approach to ABOR’s state funding request is designed to improve the state’s workforce and support a healthy economy. Each university will develop a Workforce Readiness Initiative; Arizona State University will expand engineering education and research, adding five science and technology centers; Northern Arizona University’s focus will be in healthcare, including mental and behavioral, which is the largest growing private industry in Arizona; University of Arizona will focus workforce development initiatives in its medical schools and space exploration, planetary defense, national security and asteroid exploration centers.

ASURA Lobbyists Tara Roesler, Jeri Meeks and new retiree Suzanne Bias are attending the Governor’s Community and Legislative Partners in Aging meetings again this legislative season. Sponsored by the Governor’s Council on Aging, these meetings bring together a caucus of Arizona Senators, Representatives and community partners to discuss challenges facing Arizona’s seniors. Please see our related article in this Prime Times issue for a recap of this year’s discussions.

ASURA will also host a table at the 34th Annual ASU Day at the Capitol on Tuesday Feb 11th at the Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza. This is our chance to interact with our legislators, tout our accomplishments and thank our local elected officials for supporting ASU in past and the upcoming legislative sessions. ASU colleges and departments always provide a great display of current programs and innovations and it’s always fun to see what’s new at the University.

Bills introduced for consideration this legislative season have been posted on the Arizona State Legislature website and, as usual, there is much to see! This year Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) Heath Insurance would like to move to a self-insured funding model and there are several bills posted, addressing this change. Please see Tara’s ASRS Healthcare Article in this Prime Times issue. Also, ABOR’s new Workforce Development funding model has generated many pieces of legislation.
Here’s an initial list of the bills that are worth watching:

- SB1033 – ASRS; self insurance program
- SB1034 – ASRS; required distribution
- SB1125 – ASRS eligibility; waiting period
- HB2113 – ASRS; employer; member; contributions
- HB2357 – ASRS; self-insurance program
- HB2628 – health care insurance; amendments
- HB2602 – Arizona High School graduates; tuition
- HB2141 – universities; community colleges; constitutions; instruction
- HB2491 – appropriation; Arizona Teachers Academy
- HB2238 – universities; public policy events
- HB2020 – ABOR; tuition; actual cost; deduction
- HB2460 – ABOR; tuition; deduction; actual cost
- SB1166 – appropriation; STEM internships

Last, but certainly not least, it’s an election year! Please engage in your local, state and federal elections! Contact your current legislators and tell them what you think! Do your research and VOTE!

We are pleased to have growing team of ASU Retiree Association Legislative Watchdogs monitoring the bills as they move through the legislative process, attending retiree related meetings and conferences and working with state and local representatives. My thanks to Tara Roesler, Pat Schneider, William Stasi, Larry Carlson, Dick Jacob, Suzanne Bias and all of our members who bring issues affecting retirees to our attention. Would you like to see what bills have been introduced? What legislative district you live in or who your Senator and Representatives are? The Arizona State Legislature website has all of that and more! Please visit https://www.azleg.gov/. Also, would you like to be an ASURA legislative watchdog? We would love to have you! Please contact me with your interest; jeri.meeks@asu.edu. Thank you!

**Jeri Meeks, Past President and Government Liaison**

**ASU Retirees Association**

References and Links:

- Governor Ducey’s 2020 Legislative Priorities per his State of the State address on Jan 13, 2020: https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2020/01/governor-ducey-delivers-2020-state-state-address
- Arizona 54th Legislature First Regular Session Bill Query: https://www.azleg.gov/bills/
- Legislative Districts by address: https://azredistricting.org/districtlocator/
- Contact Information for State Representatives and Senators: https://www.azleg.gov/memberroster/