

2015 Legislative Summary

The 52nd, 1st Regular Legislative Session adjourned Sine Die at 3:37 am on Friday, April 3, 2015. Session ran a total of 81 days, the shortest legislative session in the past four decades. 1,163 bills were introduced this year. Of those bills, 344 were passed by the legislature. The governor signed 324 bills and vetoed 20 bills.

When the legislative session began this year, Arizona was in the hands of all new statewide leadership. At the helm of the ship was newly elected Governor Doug Ducey, who upon his inauguration, clearly outlined his goal of passing a structurally balanced state budget and to do so in an expedited fashion.

In the House of Representatives, Republicans retained the majority with a 36-24 edge. 20 out of the 60 members that served in the House were freshman members, of which three had previously served in the legislature. To run the chamber, Representative David Gowan was elected as the Speaker of the House.

In the Senate, Republicans also remained in control of the majority, 17-13. And while the chamber welcomed eight new Senators, all of those individuals had at one time served in the House or were returning to the Senate. Additionally, Senator Andy Biggs retained his position as the President of the Senate.

On January 16, 2015, Governor Doug Ducey released his budget for fiscal year 2015-2016. The budget included a tax increase to homeowners by reducing the “homeowners rebate,” a number of cost shifts to local governments, a 3% health care provider rate cut beginning April 1, 2015, \$75 million in cuts to state Universities, use of the Rainy Day Fund, and various sweeps of agency funds.

Though the Governor’s budget remained mostly intact as introduced, there were a number of cuts that increased from the initial proposal, mainly an increase in cuts to Universities and additional fund sweeps. In direct response to concerns from the Arizona REALTORS®, the proposed tax increase to homeowners was removed from the budget. As a result, the \$20.2 million homeowner property tax increase via changes to the homeowners’ rebate was not enacted; a win for REALTORS® and all Arizona homeowners.

In all, the Arizona REALTORS® had a very successful 2015 legislative year. Below are some of the legislative and regulatory issues that the Association successfully advanced or defeated this session.

Arizona Budget

The Arizona REALTORS® were successful in protecting Arizona homeowners and businesses during the 2015 Arizona legislature’s budget cuts. Each year the state rebates up to \$600 to individual homeowners to offset their property taxes. When this rebate was threatened, the

REALTOR® association successfully saved homeowners millions of dollars by protecting the rebate from state budget cuts.

What this victory means for you:

Saves Arizona homeowners over \$20.2 million dollars by protecting the homeowners rebate from cuts in the state budget.

SB 1342: Responsibility of Payment; Utility Services

The Arizona REALTORS® lobbied to prohibit certain fees for residential services from being charged to anyone other than a person who physically resided at the property and received those services.

What this victory means for you:

Saves homeowners and landlords money by prohibiting fees for residential utility services they did not receive.

SB 1368: Municipalities; Additional Business Licenses; Prohibition

Prohibits cities and towns from requiring real estate brokers or salespersons to obtain an additional business license to do business within that city or town.

What this victory means for you:

Saves REALTORS® between \$80 - \$150 per business license when they conduct business within various municipalities.

HB 2084: Condos; Planed Communities; Assoc; Disclosure

Requires condominium and planned community associations to file their annual report to the Arizona Corporation Commission with a separate statement containing the name of the designated agent or management company for the HOA, the address for the HOA, and the contact information of the HOA or its designated agent or management company.

What this victory means for you:

Saves REALTORS® time when trying to locate contact information for condominium unit owners' and planned community homeowners' associations.