

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Week of August 14, 2023

State Issues	
Legislature Return from Recess	The Legislature is back from its summer recess. They have five weeks to complete their work before the end of the session, which is set to conclude Thursday, September 14. However, it is not unusual for the Legislature to wait until the last minute for action on bills, so we're expecting the final day of debate go late into the night or early morning of September 15.
Appropriations Committee	<p>This week, we've seen many bills move from their Appropriations Committees to the Appropriations Committee suspense calendars. This is where they hold bills that have more than a \$150,000 cost to the state to implement. This includes SB 525 (Durazo), health care minimum wage; SB 14 (Grove), human trafficking; AB 40 (Rodriguez), ambulance offload times; AB 1091 (Wood), health plan consolidation; and, AB 1331 (Wood), data sharing agreement.</p> <p>Bills on the suspense calendars will be voted on before the September 1st legislative deadline. Bills that pass that hurdle will be moved to their respective Floors for a vote before the conclusion of the session.</p>
Budget Summary	Every year the Legislative Analyst's Office publishes a review of the most recent state budget process and outcomes, called "Overview of the Spending Plan." The report is a brief summary of the budget shortfalls this year, the iterations of the budget as it moved through the process, and the spending plan finally adopted and how it addresses the state's needs. It is a great reminder of the entire process that we just went through and will come in handy when we start working on the budget for next year in the next few weeks. You can access the report via this link .
New Cal Labor Fed Legislation	<p>In keeping with what's been called the "hot labor summer," the California Labor Federation will be introducing a gut and amend bill at this late date of the Legislative Session.</p> <p>The bill is expected to provide unemployment benefits to workers who go on strike. The last-minute push comes as thousands of California workers — including actors, writers, hotel workers and municipal employees — have walked off the job during a summer ripe with union activity.</p> <p>Current California Labor Federation leader and former Assemblymember, Lorena Gonzalez Fletcher, had previously introduced a similar bill in 2019. That bill failed and received intense backlash from industry groups ranging from grocers to hospitals.</p> <p>It is likely that a large coalition of business entities will oppose the bill this year, and it may even show up on the California Chamber's Job Killer bill list. In the past, the concerns have been that the bill would effectively require employers to subsidize striking workers, even if those workers or labor strikes had nothing to do with the employer.</p>

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Behavioral Health Hearing	<p>The Governor has been working on an overhaul of Proposition 63: Mental Health Services Act, which provides \$3 for every \$10 spent in California on public mental health services. The Senate Health Committee held a hearing this week to review Governor Newsom's plan and allow a public forum for advocates to highlight areas of support and concern.</p> <p>The plan is coming in two forms – one set of policy changes will be in legislation (SB 326, Eggman) and another set of policy changes are expected to be on a statewide ballot initiative next year. Any substantive changes to Prop 63 must be approved by a vote of the people.</p> <p>The bill was recently amended after the Governor's office heard from advocates over the summer – including many who felt like children's services needed greater representation in the plan. You can access the amended bill here.</p> <p>Testifying at the hearing were Dr. Mark Ghaly, Secretary, California Health and Human Services Agency and Michelle Baass, Director, Department of Health Care Services, who provided the background, rationale and overview of the Governor's plan. They were followed with a handful of persons commenting with specific implementation concerns, including staff from the Legislative Analyst's Office and the Mental Health Oversight and Accountability Commission. The final panel included a large number of persons who were involved in the original passage of Prop 63 and will have a role in implementing any changes to it – including Darrell Steinberg, Mayor of Sacramento and Founder of the Steinberg Institute, Matt Legé with SEIU, Kim Lewis, Managing Attorney with National Mental Health Law Program, Le Ondra Clark Harvey representing the California Council of Community Behavioral Health Agencies, among others.</p> <p>There were a great number of materials created for the hearing which can be accessed below. The Assembly Health Committee will hold its informational meeting next week on August 22nd and has set the bill for a vote after that hearing.</p> <p>Senate Health Committee Background paper: https://shea.senate.ca.gov/sites/shea.senate.ca.gov/files/bhsa_mhsa_backgrounder_final.pdf</p> <p>LAO Analysis: https://shea.senate.ca.gov/sites/shea.senate.ca.gov/files/lao_mhsa_senate_hearing_handout.pdf</p> <p>Memo from the Mental Health Oversight and Accountancy Commission: https://shea.senate.ca.gov/sites/shea.senate.ca.gov/files/mhsoac_mhmp_policy_analysis.pdf</p> <p>MHSA Origin Story: https://shea.senate.ca.gov/sites/shea.senate.ca.gov/files/mhsoac_mhsa_origin_story.pdf</p> <p>Steinberg Institute Memo: https://shea.senate.ca.gov/sites/shea.senate.ca.gov/files/steinberg_institute_mhsa_revision_proposal_report.pdf</p>
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