

# FAMILY & POLICY



AN ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF

FEBRUARY 27, 2009

**The House passed its version of the FY 2009 amended budget Thursday.** The House took into account \$475 M in increased federal Medicaid matching funds from the stimulus package, and as expected, used much of it for the promised homeowner tax reduction. In *Education*, it used \$145 M from the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund to add back that amount to the K-12 QBE formula. In the *Department of Community Health*, the House restored \$2M for community health centers and \$500,000 for the Health Information Exchange pilot. In the *Department of Human Resources*, the House allocated \$3.2M back to grant-in-aid for health departments. It restored new funds of \$100,000 for sexual assault centers, \$200,000 for family violence shelters, \$150,000 for the Matthew Reardon Center, and \$250,000 for the Marcus Center. It also restored \$292,843 for non-Medicaid community services for seniors and \$225,000 for Alzheimer's respite. It restored child placing reimbursement rates for the lowest 3 levels of care for one quarter. (Some changes were made possible by recognizing enhanced federal Medicaid match within programs operated by DHR.) For details, see the [House FY 2009 Amended](#) tracking sheet. The Senate will probably move quickly to adopt its version which advocates understand may look much like the House's.

**Medicaid and PeachCare.** A substitute to [SB 165](#) (Goggans, 7<sup>th</sup>) on verification of income for Medicaid and PeachCare applicants through the Department of Revenue passed the Senate. The Senate Insurance & Labor Committee will meet for a third time on [SB 92](#) (Hill, 32<sup>nd</sup>), the proposal to convert PeachCare and Medicaid to premium assistance, on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 9:00 a.m., Mezzanine Room 1 in the Capitol. (Both 1/20 Bulletin)

**Foreclosures.** The Senate Banking & Financial Institutions Committee has recommended passage of

substitutes to two foreclosure bills (Hamrick 30<sup>th</sup>), [SB 57](#) and [SB 141](#) (1/20 Bulletin).

**Health and Safety.** [HB 229](#) (Coleman, 97<sup>th</sup>), the SHAPE Act, has passed the House and is in Senate Education and Youth (1/20 Bulletin). [SB 69](#) (Unterman, 45<sup>th</sup>), expanding the definition of child abuse to include sexual

exploitation, passed the Senate (1/30 Bulletin). [SB 23](#) (Hawkins, 49<sup>th</sup>) would provide that failure to use seatbelts can be evidence of negligence. It has passed the Senate and is in the House Judiciary Committee. A substitute to [SB 156](#) (Staton, 18<sup>th</sup>) regarding the trauma network (2/13 Bulletin)

has passed the Senate.

**Health Insurance.** [SB 161](#) (Grant 25<sup>th</sup>) would prohibit insurers from discriminating against individuals with autism spectrum disorder and require them to cover services related to the disorder. It is in Senate Insurance & Labor. [SB 94](#) (Hill, 32<sup>nd</sup>) would require that insurers allow parents to continue coverage of dependents through age 25 as long as the parents are still covered. It received a do pass by Senate Insurance & Labor.

**Government.** The House's special subcommittee on DHR Governance will meet Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3:00 p.m., 406 LOB on [HB 228](#) (Butler 18<sup>th</sup>), the bill to reorganize DHR. It is likely to vote out a substitute (1/30 and 2/13 Bulletins). A substitute to [HB 2](#) (Rice, 51<sup>st</sup>) regarding requirements for state grantees to verify citizenship status (1/23 Bulletin) will be heard in the House Appropriations Committee Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2:00 p.m., 341 Capitol. [SB 206](#) (Goggans, 7<sup>th</sup>) would require tax expenditure reviews as part of the budget process. In other states with such reviews, officials and advocates find it easier to determine whether special interest tax breaks are benefiting the state or whether the funds could be used more productively. The bill is in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

## Highlights

- The General Assembly has completed 24 legislative days.
- The House passed its version of the FY 2009 amended budget using federal stimulus funds to alleviate some cuts.

## Action needed! You can help!

Locate your State Representative and Senator: [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org) (Check your driver's license for 9-digit zip code.)

For previous issues of this Bulletin, go to [www.familiesfirst.org/Services/Advocacy](http://www.familiesfirst.org/Services/Advocacy).

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