



Capitol Update



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September 10, 2020

The Good, The Bad and the Ugly...CA 2020 State Legislature is Closed!

Midnight, August 31, 2020 marked the end of one of the most “unique” legislative sessions in the State’s history. Our “one party” state started the year off with hundreds, if not thousands, of bills just waiting to be heard at the committee level with the hope to push them through the channel to the Governor’s desk for signature. Bills filled with new ways to spend your tax dollars or increase your future contribution to our “nanny” state were being readied for committee.

Then.... along came COVID-19 and.... the session changed. Only bills focused on the issues caused by the pandemic were cleared to move forward. Less important issues like laws to curb the use of fentanyl, which would save the lives of thousands, were shelved until the 20/21 session.

The final days and hours of the legislative session flowed like a drama straight from a Hollywood script. With fewer than 10 days remaining on the calendar, one Republican Senator tested positive for COVID-19, forcing a shut down in the senate and quarantine for all but one of the Republican Senators. When the session resumed, Republicans were working remotely and fuming from being shut out of due process in debates.

From the beginning of the pandemic, new rules seemed to be redefined almost daily. The Governor put a cap of one employee in the Capitol and all off-site offices early on. Working remotely affected the flow of constituent calls, which were forwarded to off-site cell phones. Legislators were limited to one staff member assisting on the floor, and in the final hours the rules for discussion and public comment seemed to change on the spot without debate.

There was a mix of proposals that died without votes, including law enforcement bills, major housing bills, several budget-related measures, and a couple of proposed single-use plastic product measures, all with unaccountable consequences. Although many good bills, including proposed fixes to AB-5 did not pass, the Republicans were able to block 80 bills from moving forward.

In the end - it is GOOD News – only 428 bills will be sent to the Governor’s desk. Compare this with the 1217 sent to Newsom office in 2019. All in all, the CA State Legislative session ended on a good note!

