



Kate Bradshaw

Director of Government Affairs
801.799.5711
Salt Lake City
kabradshaw@hollandhart.com

Utah Legislative Update: May 2016

Insight — 5/06/2016

Special Session:

After the Governor vetoed three bills and seven line-item appropriations, it seemed that the Legislature might convene a veto override session. However, calmer voices prevailed and instead the Legislature and Governor agreed to hold a Special Session to address some of the vetoed items on May 18th, 2016. The items to be considered are:

- A concurrent resolution opposing the unilateral designation of a national monument in the State of Utah.
- The restoration of \$4.7 million in appropriated funds due to line item vetoes to the Public Education budget in S.B. 2.

There are rumors of negotiations taking place on S.B. 258 Solid Waste Amendments, which was vetoed over concerns raised by the EPA. If the entities supporting the bill and the Utah Department of Environmental Quality can find a compromise solution, it is likely this bill will also be added to the Special Session.

Interim Schedule & Study Items:

The Legislative Management Committee met and set the interim meeting schedule and study items for the remainder of the year. Interim meetings usually take place on the third Wednesday of each month. In July, the meetings will be moved to the second Wednesday to avoid other national conferences and conventions. Interim meetings will not be held in August (traditional recess) and in December (when planning caucus meetings are held instead).

The interim is a very valuable part of the political process. Issues receive more in-depth study and attention during the interim committee hearings, and legislators are much more willing to take time to thoroughly understand an issue. The committee bill process is a valuable option for clients who have a consensus solution to a problem and want to be at the head of the line for the annual legislative session. I review all the interim agendas and am happy to keep an eye out for any issues of particular concern to clients. Please feel free to talk with me about issues that are important to clients that you would like on my radar.

Primary Elections:

Lest you think only the Presidential election is causing drama this year, you are missing out on an interesting local election cycle! Both the

Democratic and Republican state parties held county and state level conventions during April to narrow the field of party nominees to the ballot. This is the first year that candidates can also choose a signature-gathering path to the Primary ballot. The new approach has created a topsy-turvy election cycle with court challenges, questions of party faithfulness, and uncertainty for candidates.

The race for Governor and a number of legislative seats will go to Primaries this year. Some of these races are due to signature-gathering, which guaranteed an automatic spot on the Primary ballot, and others are due to delegate votes at the convention, where the 60% threshold wasn't reached by either candidate. The Legislature will likely make some changes to the signature-gathering law before the 2018 election cycle, so get some popcorn, sit back, and enjoy some of the local political theater that might be a one-time occurrence!

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