April Legislative Report

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BUDGET- Leadership is working on a budget but according to the Pro Temp, this has been made difficult by the economic impact of COVID-19 on the current and next fiscal year budgets. The governor's declaration of a state of emergency permits the Legislature to tap up to three-eighths of the Rainy Day Fund, currently at $800 million. The Legislature also can use money in the Revenue Stabilization Fund that was created in 2019, which has a $200 million balance. Finally, the federal response to COVID-19 includes additional money for State and local governments, particularly for public schools, with Oklahoma receiving at least $ 1.534 billion. Outside the Health Department it is likely that Health and Human Services will see flat budgets or slight increases. I would expect a budget mid to late April.

LEGISLATION – The last legislative action was on March 17th, when both chambers approved SB 661, allowing for virtual open meetings, and went home. Since then, they are in the third week with no legislative activity. We have kept legislative leaders and staff apprised of our COVID-19 status by email.

The House's April 9th deadline for Senate bills and joint resolutions looms, as does the April 17th deadline for appropriation measures. However, it is expected these will be waived. The Senate removed its April 7th deadline for House bills and joint resolutions the 17th, when both chambers adjourned indefinitely to the call of the chair. That said, it is likely that outside of a few critical bills and the budget, no other legislation will pass. I do not expect any of our bills to progress this year.