

Arizona Shutdown Leaves Citizens, Gov. Candidate Frustrated

By Houston Barnett-Gearhart

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Arizona has never in its 97 years as a state shut down for a lack of budget. That is, until now.

The six month gridlock between Governor Brewer and the Arizona Legislature has concluded in a nearly complete shutdown of the government. Because of the novelty of the situation, state officials have been left without a clear sense of how to proceed, ultimately questioning which government functions will continue.

As a result of the GOP standoff between Governor Brewer, Senator Burns, and Representative Adams which failed to bring to fruition a budget deal, scores of government functions have ground to a halt. Under plans submitted to the Department of Administration, drivers' licenses will be unavailable, road construction will come to a standstill, and reports of child abuse will not be investigated. Moreover, across the state, parks will close, visitation at state prisons will be suspended and the Department of Health Services will be unable to track infectious diseases.

According to Arizona gubernatorial candidate John Paul Mitchell, the months-long gridlock between the governor and legislative body over the state budget is inexcusable. Additionally, Mitchell comments that "the inability of our elected officials to do their job is devastating and irresponsible," consequently suggesting that "these government officials be recalled from their entrusted vocation and duties," a sentiment echoed by Senator Carolyn Allen. "We have the votes to throw them out ... but nobody wants their job," speaking specifically about senators Pamela Gorman and Chuck Gray who voted against the same sales-tax referral they endorsed just a few days prior.

"The impact of a statewide shutdown of our government and the necessary services it provides will affect every Arizona man, woman, and child" says Mitchell. Carol Stambaugh, with the Arizona chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, fears the threat to health care for the poor and aforementioned child abuse investigations the recent shutdown has made. "We already know that child abuse reports are up. This is the absolute worst possible time that we could see a shutdown in which there would be no ability to investigate new child abuse cases," Stambaugh says. Although Mitchell realizes "at this time, the impact is unforeseen," he believes that "if we continue without a budget or adequate solution, the consequences may be extreme and horrifying."

The contingency plans that have been drafted in case of a shutdown only work to fund limited government functions for a limited amount of time. These limited government functions will most likely only be those that are specifically required by the state or federal constitutions, court order or voter mandate, according to William Bell, the Director of the Department of Administration. Left in the wake of this shutdown will be low-income families who rely on daycare subsidies in order to work, government employees of "unnecessary" agencies who will not receive their paychecks July 2, and many, many others.

Frustrated by the lack of professionalism and prioritizing Governor Brewer and the Arizona Legislature has exhibited the past six months, Mitchell seeks to remind the citizens of Arizona that "if our elected officials will not take charge, then we must replace them with intelligent and determined citizens that will." Additionally, Mitchell calls upon the citizens of Arizona to remember that they are part of a representative democracy, and that they have the utmost power to unseat and seat whomever they wish by a popular vote. Despite the dark cloud that has moved in over the State of Arizona, Mitchell believes "we can make it through these challenging times when we are willing to bring the citizens and elected officials together in a unified assembly to resolve our state's budget ordeal."

John Paul Mitchell is an Independent candidate for Arizona's 2010 gubernatorial race. As a businessman and fiscal conservative, Mitchell believes government should be run like a business. This belief stems from the irresponsibility of politicians, from both the executive and legislative branches of our state republic, to balance a responsible budget. Additionally, Mitchell has authored a book titled "No More Taxes," a historical and spiritual book on the ethics and morality of money and taxes that lies down the fundamentals of why America was founded, why it was necessary for international bankers to start a centralized banking system, and how the 16th Amendment to the Constitution was never legally ratified. Mitchell is available for interviews and additional comments. For additional information, please visit <http://www.aznextgov.org>.

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